Classic Gamer Magazine

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The Latest Scoop on the Coolest Cat

Carl Forhan Expands our Atari Jaguar Coverage!

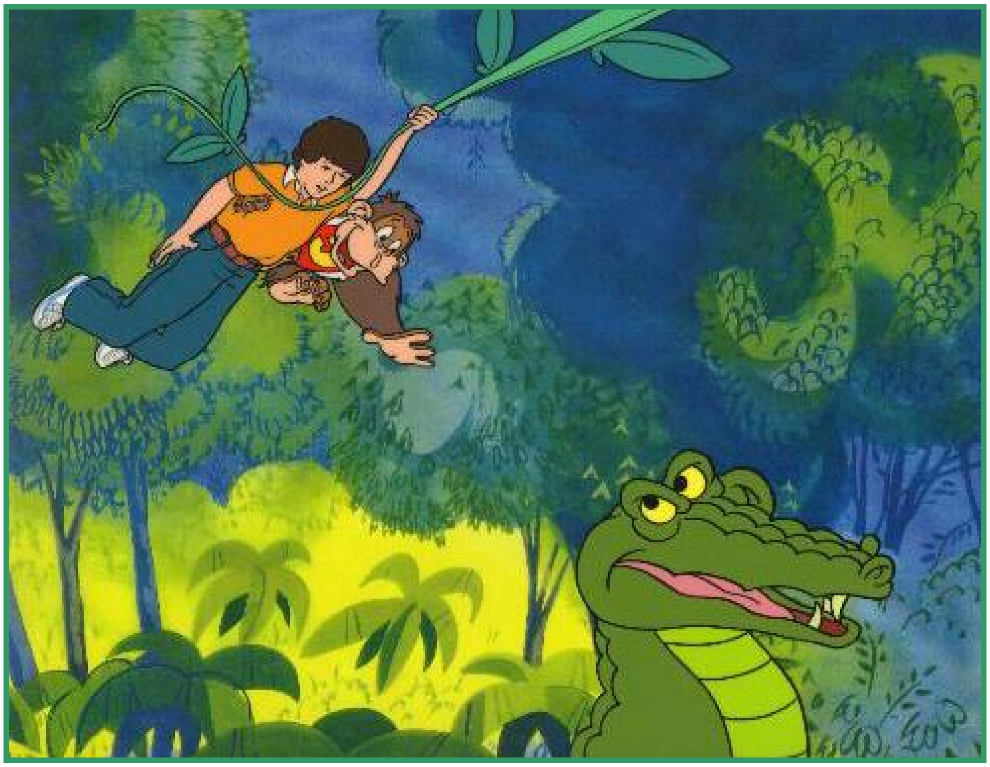
Leonard Herman Exposes the "Ultimate Classic Gaming Company"

(...and it's probably not who you think!)

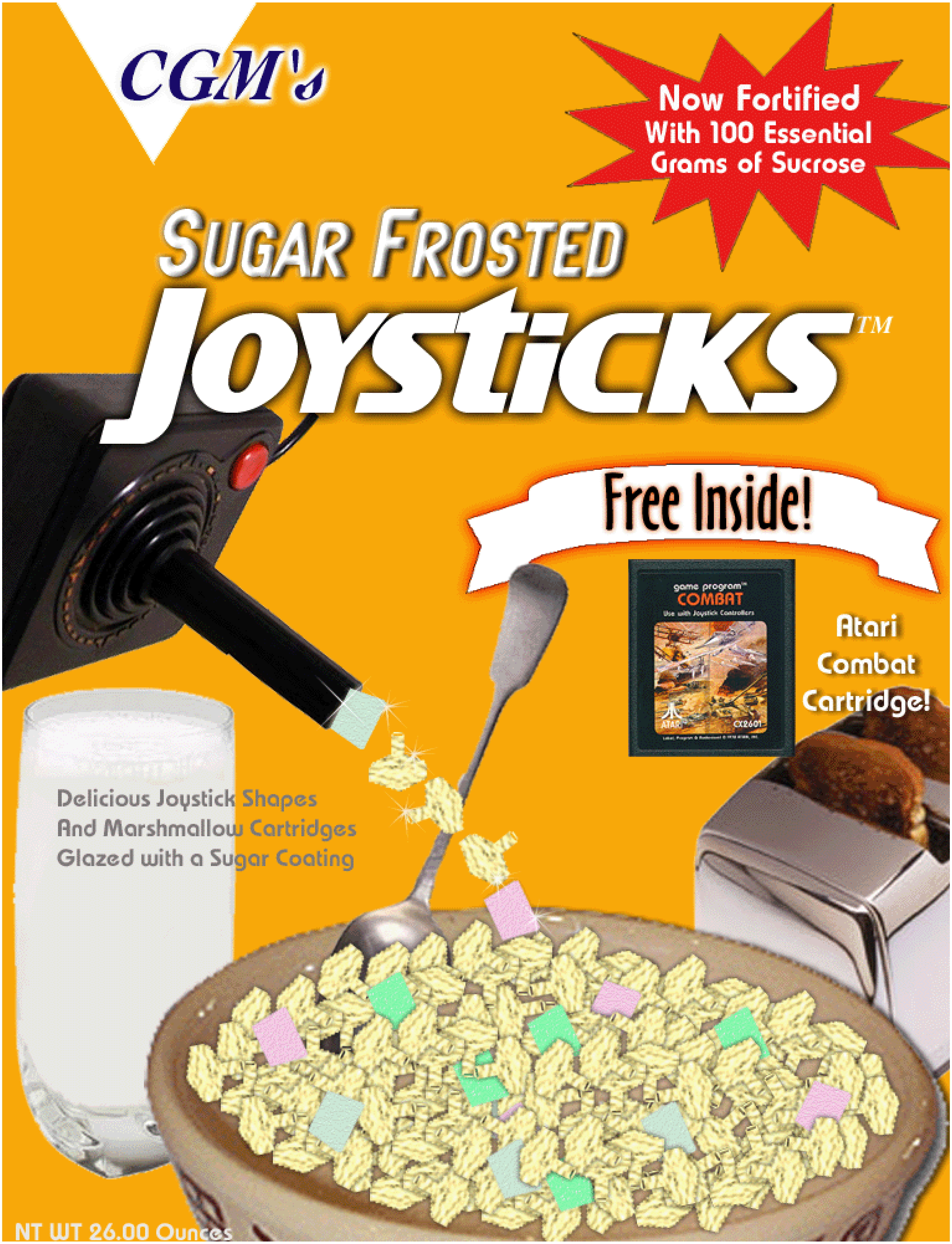
We Dig Into Our Pantries and Toy Boxes to Show you the Hottest Classic Gaming Memorabilia!

PAC-MAN
WITH AVEC MS. PAC-MAN
DONKEY KONG
DONKEY KONG JUNIOR
WILD with fruit flavor!
PAC-MAN
PRO
CHILD'S
MS. PAC-MAN
SOFT
DOCTOR ORION ISN'T LAUGHING.
AN EMPTY SPACESUIT

Michael Thomasson



A rare, original cel from the Donkey Kong Jr. Cereal commercial from the 1980's. You'd think the kid on the vine would be a bit more concerned about the alligator who wants to eat him.
From the collection of Michael Thomasson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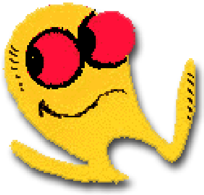

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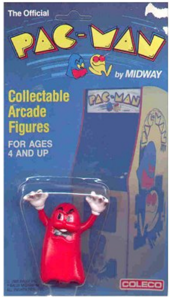
The Official
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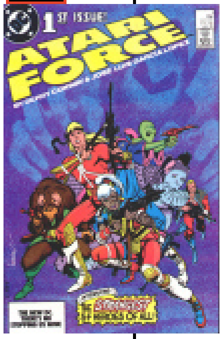

1ST ISSUE
ATARI FORCE

55

Reset

by
Chris Cavanaugh

We just flew back from the CGExpo, and boy are our arms tired! Ha! How do I come up with 'em? (Actually, we drove.) If you weren't at the Expo, shame on you and begin making plans for next year's event!

Just in case you were afraid that the "retro gaming craze" was coming to an end, you've got another think coming! At the Expo, there were new games coming out the wazoo! Intellivision Productions is releasing not one, not two, but THREE games. GCE Services had TWO new games available for play on your Colecovision, and a new game from the guys at Ebivision was up for grabs as part of a promotion for the new book, Supercade. Far from dying, I would say!

Of course, we had our usual booth there (in our usual spot, no less!) and were fortunate enough this year to get to meet plenty of our valued subscribers. We even took one lucky subscriber (Mr. Papagiorgio) for a night on the strip, CGM party style! (to this moment, I'm still not sure if we bored him to death). So, thanks to all of you who stopped by to say hello, and thanks to all of the new subscribers we picked up at the show.

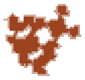
So, what do we have in store for you, our valued readers, this issue? For starters we're taking a look at some of the merchandising that accompanied videogames of the 80's. Michael Thomasson has created another slick cover for us featuring a collage of such merchandising goodies. Was there anything they didn't sell back then?

In our mergers and acquisitions department, we have been fortunate enough to pick up a couple recognizable names. We've brought Carl Forhan on board to bring us the latest and greatest news on the Jaguar and Lynx front. Don't be silly, of course he won't be reviewing his own games! Only we, the editors, have the right to rip him limb from limb in a review! Welcome aboard Carl! Also along for the ride is Leonard Herman. Yeah, *THAT* Leonard Herman, author of "Phoenix." Leonard will be bringing his vast historical knowledge of videogames to teach us all a thing or two about when Ralph Baer and Nolan Bushnell ruled the earth. We're also forever indebted to Leonard for wearing his CGM t-shirt at the CGExpo while covering the event for Electronic Games Magazine. Heh, heh, heh!

And just to show you we can be both prehistoric and timely, we bring you coverage of May's Electronic Entertainment Expo as well as CGExpo coverage from July 29-30. We got our paddies on the newest games you'll be seeing in the upcoming months, and frankly things are looking pretty good. Even Galaga managed to do an about face between E3 and CGExpo. Go figure!

So grab your favorite Pac-Man mug, and get reading!

-Cav



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Chris Cavanaugh

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Chris has been a die-hard gamer since he brought his first Atari home for an illicit affair in 1979. When not being a slave driver to his faithful writers, he reads comic books, has an Internet addiction, and is basically successful at being a tremendous geek. He also has a mentally ill cat named “Boo Boo” who sprays.

Sarah Thomas

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Sarah Thomas, our managing editor, is quite the stickler for detail. For example, she knows the difference between “its” and “it’s” and doesn’t have any problem reminding the writers (and Editor-in-Chief) about these, and other, differences.

Sarah also has an open challenge to anyone who thinks they can beat her at Chuckie Egg.

Lee K. Seitz

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Lee K. Seitz is a computer programmer with a classic video game obsession. He runs the Classic Video Games Nexus (http://home.hiwaay.net/~lkseitz/cvg/nexus), the definitive list of classic video games WWW links. He welcomes opportunities to pass his knowledge on to others, but beware, once you get him started, it's hard to get him to stop.

Tim Snider

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Tim "Sniderman" Snider is managing editor of a specialty medical magazine who, when he's not writing about urology, writes about and collects for the Atari 2600. He was a contributing editor to "QuestBusters: The Adventurer's Newsletter" way, way, waaaay back in the 1980s. He has also written for "Metagame," the live-action RPG magazine and "2600 Connection." He is best known in classic videogaming circles as the designer of classic-hacks "Mystery Science Theater 2600," "HozerQuest: Thrifting Simulator," and "The Blair Witch Project," all for the Atari 2600.

His newest project is programming a survival horror game for the 2600. However, considering his talent with the 6502, it will probably be finished sometime in 2008.

Henry Hutcheson

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Henry is the youngest staff member at Classic Gamer. He is a huge Sega fan and currently owns all Sega systems. Henry also writes for www.dreamcast.vgsites.net, and www.dreamcast.net, as well as a few other sites. He is known to be crazy but hasn't been taken to any mental hospitals...yet.

Kyle Snyder

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Kyle is an avid videogame collector from Virginia, a prolific writer and has amazing luck at garage sales. He is engaged to be married soon to his true love, Selene!

Damien Quicksilver

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Damien Quicksilver is a mystery, even to us. We're not sure where he came from, where he's going, or why he won't go away.

We don't know how his mind works, or for that matter, IF it works. His articles range from mildly offensive to extremely offensive. He utilizes a "style over substance" philosophy that leaves you thinking you've read a good article, even though you have no idea what it was about.

Carl Forhan

Songbird@atari.net

Carl Forhan apparently enjoys being chained to a computer, as he has been feverishly working for the past two years on publishing new software for the Atari Jaguar and Lynx platforms under the Songbird Productions label. This is in addition to holding down an engineering job and working as a volunteer youth pastor. Check out all his latest Atari efforts at http://songbird.atari.net.

Leonard Herman

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Leonard Herman is a technical writer and computer programmer who became hooked on videogames after he played Pong at a local bowling alley in 1972. He later became interested in home videogames when he purchased his Atari VCS in 1978 and eventually accumulated a near-complete collection of NTSC cartridges for that system. Leonard has written articles for Videogaming & Computer Illustrated, Games Magazine, Electronic Gaming Monthly, and the Gamespot website. He’s also written two books on videogames: "Phoenix: The Fall & Rise of Videogames" (which Wired Magazine called the definitive book on videogame history) and "ABC To The VCS (A Directory of Software for the Atari 2600)." Leonard has also written a chapter on the Atari 2600 for Van Burnham's forthcoming book "Supercade: A Visual History of the Videogame Age 1971-1984." He is a long standing member of the North Atlantic Videogame Aficionados (NAVA) and has served as an advisor for Videotopia, a traveling videogame museum exhibit.

Leonard resides in New Jersey with his wife Tamar and sons Ronnie and Gregory. He is hard at work preparing the third edition of Phoenix, which he plans to release in early 2001.

Earl Green

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Earl Green is a television promotions writer/producer currently working for the news department of an ABC affiliate. He's also a classic arcade and console aficionado, photographer, music lover (and musician), and all-around sci-fi fan, all of which is reflected in his own web site, theLogBook.com. He lives with his wife Jan and three very strange cats.

Kevin Savetz

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Kevin Savetz is a free-lance computer technology writer and Atari 8-bit junkie. He coordinates the Digital Antic Project Web site (www.atarimagazines.com), which offers the full text of most issues of Antic magazine. His latest project is www.atariarchives.org, which offers Atari software and information, including the text of Mapping the Atari.

Patrick Wong

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Patrick is a Brooklyn, New York native who enjoys stuffing himself with Coney Island hot dogs and then riding the subways until he’s sick.

Patrick is an avid gamer, both old and new, and when not assisting with Internet start-ups, enjoys writing novels while traveling 100 miles per hour on his motorcycle. Patrick was also featured in the soon to be Academy Award winning film, Center Stage.

Chris Lion

clion@classicgamer.com

When not writing his own electronic fanzine, Slap and Tickle, Chris is busy being a Professor of Comedy Arts at Stanford University. His hobbies include windsurfing, natural childbirth, and dressing like a Pong paddle while stalking Chelsea Clinton. He also failed to get his bio in before deadline, forcing someone else to write it.

Michael Thomasson

mikecase@mindspring.com

Michael Thomasson is a professional 3D Animator (previously a programmer) & classic gaming hobbyist.

He operates the GoodDeal Games Website (www.GoodDealGames.com), which hosts a series of classic gaming information including interviews, articles, crosswords, online arcade, news, postcards, and original comic strips – all classic game related! His latest project is WGDG Videogame Online Radio which features game music, audio interviews, classic gaming commercials, and more.

Raves 'n Rants

Got something to say?
Mail us at:
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Or by e-mail:
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Just say "No" to Tron II

I'm going to be blunt here. Tron needs a sequel/remake like my Colecovision needs a couple of spin cycles in the washing machine.

The recent rumors that Pixar is planning on reviving the Tron franchise" (*what* franchise? It's one movie and about a dozen games!), perhaps in an all-CGI form, fills me with dread. Have the lackluster remakes of "Psycho," "Lost In Space," and other classic films and TV shows taught us nothing?

Let me put it another way. The concepts and look of Tron were so far ahead of 1982 that the movie was almost doomed to become a cult favorite among computer geeks, gamers, and virtually no one else. Yet, 18 years later, Tron comes across as a very simplistic concept. These days, computer users *do* routinely send their alter egos forth to do battle with someone else's alter ego via online multiplayer games. These days, the thought of a hacker taking over huge swathes of computers through a global network is the stuff of national news headlines and meetings in Washington, not just sci-fi movies. These days, Clu's tank doesn't have to be captured by Recognizers - he could just as easily run into a firewall.

As dumbed-down-at-Disney's-behest as I've always suspected Tron was, this movie was nearly two decades ahead of the curve.

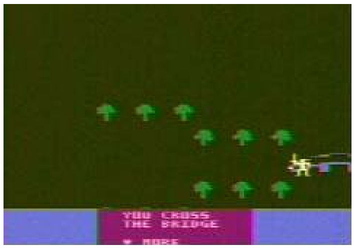
What could be done to the same story that wouldn't seem incredibly simplistic now? The charm of Tron was, quite simply, that it was a look at things that could someday happen. Granted, I haven't seen anyone use computers to suck Jeff Bridges into a mainframe, let alone an orange (though, and this is kind of eerie, extremely primitive teleportation experiments and calculations *are* taking place, using fruit and vegetables as organic test subjects). But it would wind up being a cold splash in the face of "so what?"

As for a sequel...don't get me started on sequels. Tron doesn't need a sequel, either. Neither does "The Matrix," for that matter, but that's a whole other groundbreaking computer-animated subject entirely.

My plea to Hollywood: go plagiarize someone else. Tron was a cool movie, perhaps more because of when and how it was made than the content of the script. It's a truly prescient piece of what used to be considered cutting-edge filmmaking that would lose its uniqueness if put through the plot-recycling Cuisinart of Hollywood. Leave it be.

End of line.

-John Dillinger,
California
State Prison
System #1304520


YOU CROSS
THE BRIDGE
▼ MORE

Mr. Dillinger (if that's REALLY your name!), I think you may be right. If Flynn were to be digitized into a computer system today, I'm afraid he would get his arse kicked rather soundly by any given character from Soul Calibur. Except, now how are we going to go about getting new Tron games (I'm still waiting to play Space Paranoids) and cool new Tron toys for our landfills? I seriously doubt we'll see the day a Tron sequel is released. Then again, it certainly wouldn't surprise me. In the meantime, check out our feature on Tron Toys by Earl Green on page 19.

Maybe if We Tried Saying "Please"?

There's a small factual inaccuracy in your Dragonstomper article. You say "Do not attempt to fight the guard. You cannot win." This is NOT TRUE. You CAN beat him. The only problem is he has something like twice the hit points than the dragon has (I don't remember how many exactly though).

A long time ago, when my brother, David Perry, was busy wearing out my Survival Island tape, he was also playing a lot of Dragonstomper. He wasn't content to believe the guard was impossible to beat, so he bulked up for hours and went after him. He's not sure how many HP the guy had though . . . he *thinks* 120 or 150 but is not sure.

-Russ Perry via e-mail

Thanks for the correction, Russ! We always appreciate good due diligence. I guess we now know we should've written: "Do not attempt to fight the guard unless you have one helluva lot of strength points and a boatload of time…"

By the way, you'll still find it's easier to just hand him the "Paper" to cross the bridge. On another note, our alert cover artist, Michael Thomasson pointed out that we failed to mention what system Dragonstomper was on. For the record, it's playable on the Atari 2600 when utilizing the Starpath Supercharger.

COMPUTER
GAMING
WORLD
100
HOT NEW
GAMES

By George (Jones)!! We're Mentioned Again!

Ziff Davis publishing's Computer Gaming World was kind enough to mention us on page 39 of their August 2000 issue.

"Another retro-oriented effort is Classic Gamer Magazine (www.classicgamer.com), a high-quality fanzine based in San Diego and run by editor-in-chief Chris Cavanaugh. CGM offers up some lively discourse on everything from the Atari 2600 to the original NES to the earliest home computer games.

In the latest Spring 2000 issue, for example, classic enthusiasts can read about ADVENTURE for the Atari 2600, and a great nostalgia-inducing walkthrough of the early Ultima games."

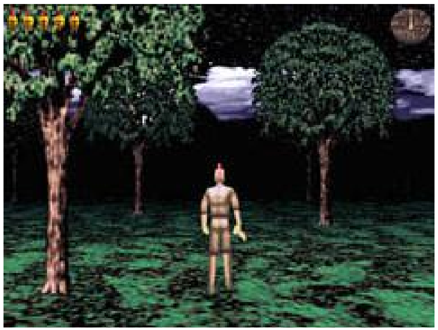
Sequel to an Unreleased Vectrex Game to Hit Your PC

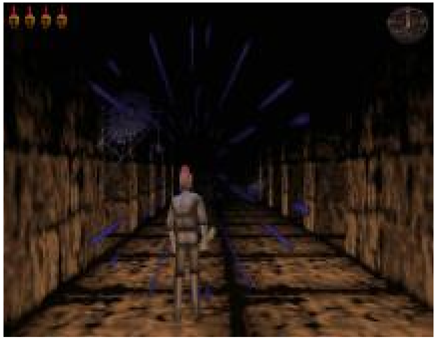
Do you own a Vectrex? Do you own the game "Dark Tower"? Odds are you don't. Unfortunately, even though it should have been among our favorite classic games, Dark Tower for the Vectrex was never released. But all is not lost.....you shall go to the ball! Salsa Shark Productions has announced the release of their first PC game, Shadow of the Lost Citadel, which is a modern homage to Dark Tower.

The game, a 3D fantasy/adventure type, has you travel through a series of dark forests in search of special items (while avoiding dangers). The goal is to find several keys, locate the Citadel, solve its riddle, and lift the dreadful curse over the realm of Broodweed! It is a game for the entire family that captures the sword and sorcery mood of Dark Tower, while offering a fresh look for the PC.

www.salsagames.com

SHADOW OF THE LOST CITADEL





Want New INTV Games?

As many of you are probably aware, there have been several new releases lately for various classic consoles, such as Vectrex, Atari 2600, Colecovision, Odyssey2, Lynx, and the Jaguar. Can you spot the missing console? We haven't seen any new games released for the Intellivision in a long time. Some would say that we are due some new Intellivision games. One such person has made it his mission to convince software houses that there is a demand for new Intellivision games, and you can help make his dream a reality.

Valter Prette, the founder of makeINTVgame! and an avid Intellivision fan, is in the beginning stages of persuading companies to resume their Intellivision development. Currently, he needs to obtain signatures from interested gamers to prove to the software houses that people are interested.

To add your signature go to:

http://digilander.iol.it/AlternativeThought/makeINTVgame.htm

CGM NEWSWIRE CGM NEWSWIRE CGM NEW

Trade Those Carts!

Are you looking to trade in your games for different ones? Want to trade a Pac-Man for an Astroblast? Perhaps your usual method isn't cutting it anymore? Enter a new player into the disposal and acquisition game - Switchouse.com. Claiming to be the largest swapping site on the Internet, Switchouse appears to model themselves after eBay and has the drive to become the eBay/Amazon of swapping. In addition to being able to trade CDs, movies, and books, the site has a large section for game trades (both new and classic). Once your trade is completed, Switchouse will charge a small fee for each item being traded.

The site appears to be clearly organized, and as it continues to grow, we assume that the pool of items to be traded will grow exponentially.

www.switchouse.com

SwitcHouse

"One Million Cartridges!"

Ever wonder what a million Atari cartridges look like? Well, thanks to Bill Houlehan of O'Shea, you can not only SEE what a million-cartridge empire looks like, but you can BUY the games, too! Having snatched up Atari's entire inventory, Bill claims to "have the largest inventory of Atari cartridges in the world, and they are all new, never opened, with all the manuals -- in mint condition." He sells 46 different titles for the 2600 and 7800, including (for the 2600) Space Invaders, Phoenix, Galaxian, Jungle Hunt, and Dark Chambers; and (for the 7800) Centipede, Joust, Ballblazer, Tower Toppler, and Robotron. The best part is that the games cost only .80 plus shipping.

www.atariclassic.com

Adventure INTERNATIONAL

Scott Adams Announces “Return to Pirate’s Island II”

Scott Adams (the father of the text adventure, not the Dilbert guy!) is working on a sequel to his hit game, Return to Pirate’s Island.

True to its original form, **Return to Pirate’s Island II** will not feature any graphics, but will now allow full sentence commands as opposed to two-word commands.

Return to Pirate’s Island II is due to be released in August and can be purchased and downloaded from Scott Adams’ website. It will cost $14.95 and will be playable on PC’s only.

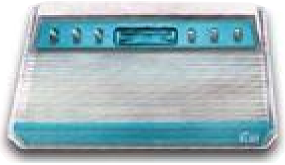
http://www.msadams.com/

Presenting the all-new iTari.

Ok, not really. But, Ron Watt and Mark Boszko have created a hilarious ad parody by crossing the new style packaging of the iMac with the outdated clunkiness of our favorite console. It’s too bad it’s just a spoof because I’d buy one in a heartbeat!

Check out the full “advertisement” as well as their other works at:

http://www.aalgar.com/aalcorp/062900/

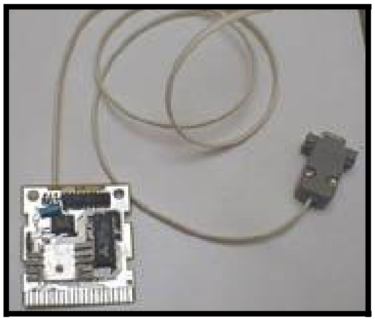


The Vintage Computer Festival 4.0 is a celebration of computers and their history. This San Jose, CA event, being held September 30th through October 1st, features speakers, a vintage computer exhibition, a vintage computer marketplace, and contests.

http://www.vintage.org/2000/

CGM NEWSWIRE CGM NEWSWIRE CGM NEW

The Intellicart



The Intellicart, created by Chad Schell of California, is an Intellivision cartridge emulator that connects to your computer's serial port and allows you to download Intellivision ROM images and play them on your actual Intellivision. Chad wanted to use his computer skills to give something to the classic gaming community and came up with the idea to produce the Intellicart after reading about people's wishes for such a tool.

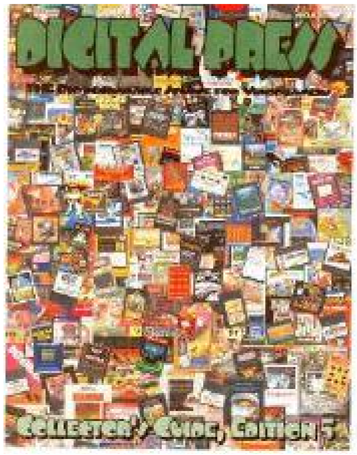
As simply put as possible, you insert the Intellicart into your Intellivison, download a ROM image into the Intellicart from your computer (which is attached to the Intellicart via a serial port), and play the game!

The Intellicart serves as a blank slate each time the Intellivison is turned on so that any number of games can be played using just one cart. Chad has almost completed his first shipment of Intellicarts, and the feedback has been very positive. Other than a few minor glitches, people have been pleased with the cart's performance. He is currently forming a waiting list for a second run of the Intellicart. To learn more about his project, how it works, and to read users' reviews, go to:

http://www.schells.com/intellicart.html

We’re on the Web!

http://www.classicgamer.com



It's never too early to start thinking about the perfect Christmas gift for your favorite classic gamer, and we have a great suggestion. An all new 6th edition of the Digital Press Classic Video Game Collector's Guide will soon be available as an updated replacement for the sold out 5th edition.

With previous editions being renowned as the ultimate guides for classic video game collectors, the new edition will feature additional sections on classic 8-bit computers: Commodore 64, Texas Instruments TI-99/4A, Commodore VIC-20, and the Tandy Color Computer TRS-80. It will also provide collectors with updated rarities and price changes so you'll know exactly what your flea market find is worth.

With a scheduled release date of late fall, Digital Press is now accepting pre-orders for the guide, priced at $20 (including shipping to anywhere in the US).

www.digitpress.com/

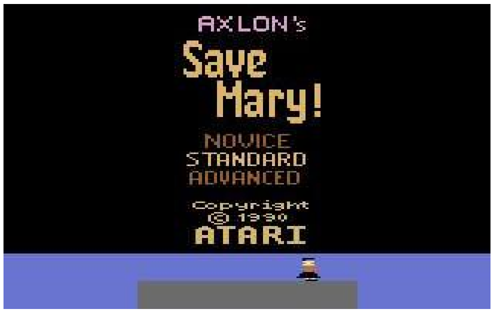
Classic Prototype News

Alexander Bilstein, creator of the Atari 2600 Nexus, has been busy locating and releasing hard to find Atari game roms.

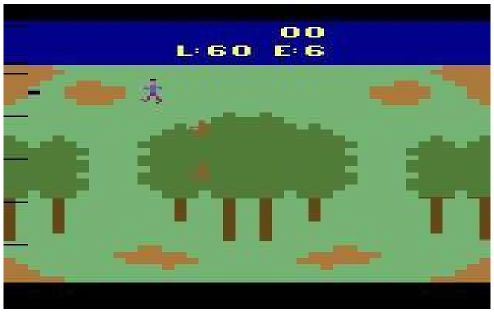
Recent releases, which are playable on Atari emulators, include: 20th Century Fox's **"Alligator People,"** Atari's **"Stunt Cycle"** and **"Dukes of Hazzard Version 2,"** and the long lost Axlon game, **"Save Mary."**

According to Bilstein, "The 'V2' Dukes game is probably an alternate version of the other 'Dukes of Hazzard' game rather than an unreleased sequel. You'll notice from the screenshots that Dukes V2 is simply a takeoff of Stunt Cycle."

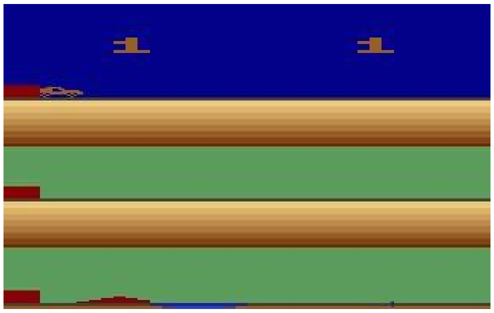
www.atari2600nexus.com



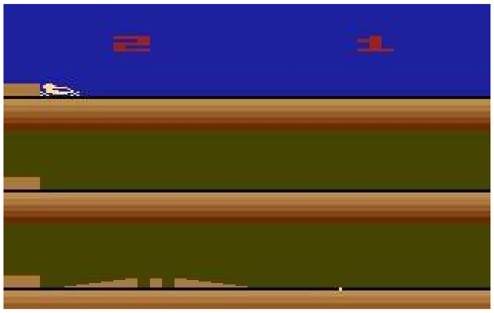
Save Mary



Alligator People



Dukes of Hazzard V2



Stunt Cycle

CGM NEWSWIRE CGM NEWSWIRE CGM NEW

Happy Birthday Intellivision!

To celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Intellivision, Intellivision is releasing new products.

Intellivision Rocks! for the PC and PlayStation is the follow up to their hit compilation **Intellivision Lives!** This compilation will include such titles as **Dreadnaught Factor**, **Beamrider**, **Microsurgeon** and **Demon Attack**.

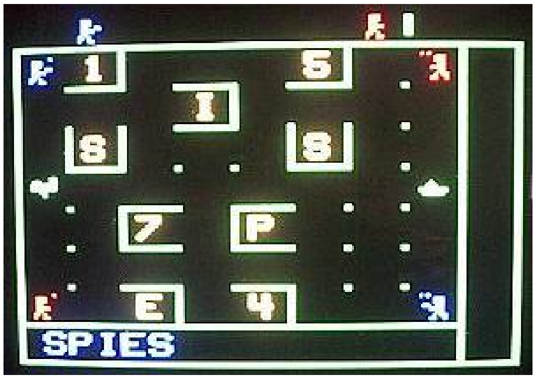
Previously unreleased M Network games such as **Sea Battle** and **Swordfight** for the Atari 2600 and **Steamroller** for the Colecovision, were unveiled at this year's Classic Gaming Expo 2000.

www.intellivisionlives.com

Odyssey ^{2} Prototype Discovered

French collector, Nico, won a boatload of game EPROM's on an eBay auction. In the mix he found an unreleased game for the Odyssey^2/Videopac called **Interpol**.

Since there was no instruction manual included, Nico is having difficulty figuring out how to play it. "The problem concerning the game is that I don't understand the rules! It seems to be quite a complicated game but each game is not very long. I want it to be public so people can find out how to play it. Not a simple Pac Man for sure!" Visit his website and lend him a hand.



Interpol

http://perso.club-internet.fr/sap1/vpac/interpol.htm

Centipede Goes Hollywood

According to Hasbro Interactive/Atari, you can expect to see a brand new Saturday morning Centipede cartoon adventure series in the near future.

The cartoon will debut in 2001, along with a brand new game based on the cartoon adventure.

NINTENDO 64 RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR CLASSIC RELATED GAMES

August 2000
Mario Tennis

September 2000
Spider-Man

October 2000
Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask

November 2000
Greatest Arcade Hits I
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness

December 2000
Paper Mario (RPG)

SONY PLAYSTATION RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR CLASSIC RELATED GAMES

September 2000
Superman

September 2000
Bomberman Party Edition
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness
Super Breakout
Galaga
Frogger II

Release Schedule

GAME BOY RELEASE SCHEDULE CLASSIC RELATED GAMES

August 2000
Gauntlet Legends

September 2000
Spider-Man

November 2000
Donkey Kong Country

TBA
Frogger2
Galaga
Galaxian
Gauntlet
Q*Bert

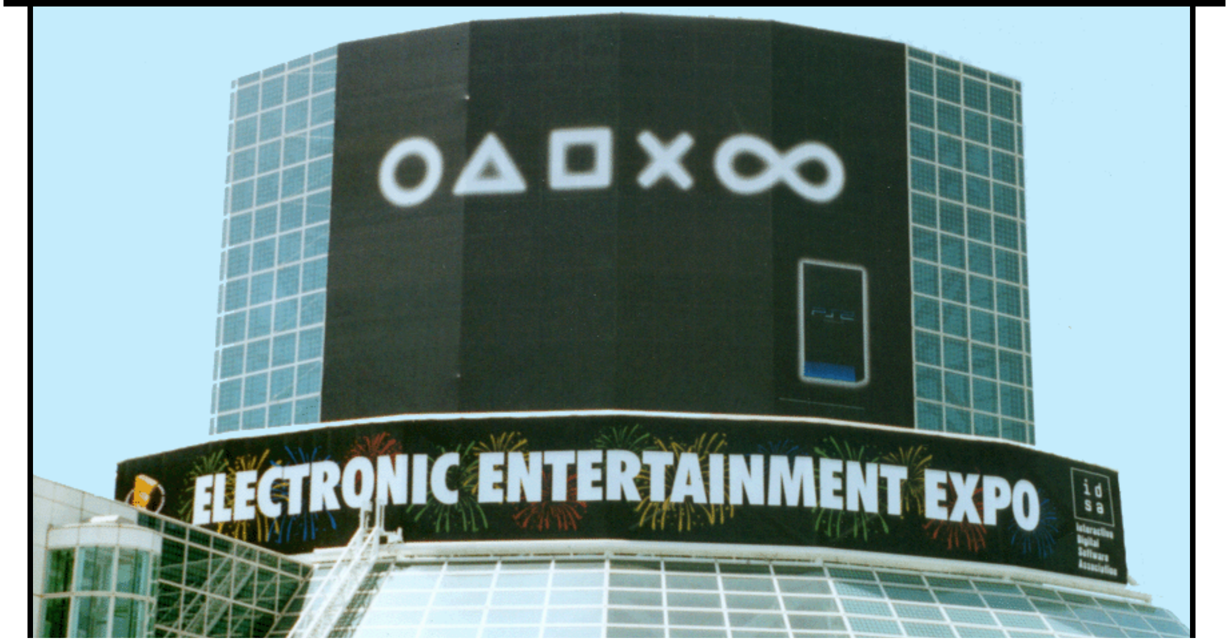
DREAMCAST RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR CLASSIC RELATED GAMES

October 2000
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness

TBA
Ecco the Dolphin

Electronic Entertainment Expo

Special Report


ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO
idsa
Interactive Digital Software Association

Well, once again we headed north to the Land of Smog to visit the annual videogame theme park known as E3. We were on the prowl to find out what's in store for classic gamers in the coming year. We found the standard, expected updates from Atari such as Galaga, Frogger 2, and Pac-Man, but we were also surprised to find some surprisingly high quality products such as Dragon's Lair 3D and Tempest 3000. There were even a few obscure releases like Hologram Time Traveler and an update of Castle Wolfenstein. With so many classic updates and re-releases, it looks like it should be another banner year for the classic gaming community.

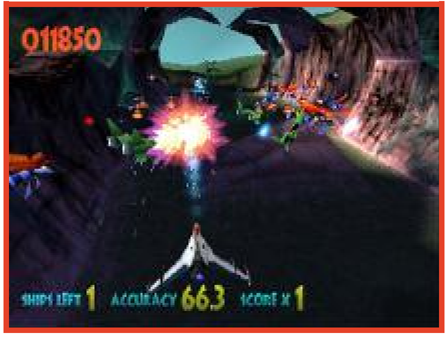
Frogger 2
Frogger 2
SWAMPY'S REVENGE

BREAK OUT
BREAK OUT
PAC-MAN
PAC

PAC-MAN
PAC-MAN
PAC-MAN
Adventures in Time

E3 2000 Classic Game Overviews

Galaga: Destination Earth

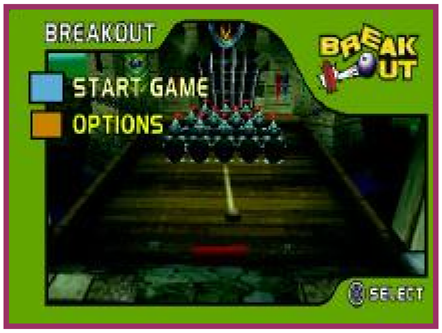


The attacking space bugs are back and are making a beeline towards earth (why, to destroy it, of course!), and it's up to you to stop them.

We were eager to finally get our hands on this remake at Atari's booth and walked away fairly impressed. Hasbro/Atari has done exactly as you would expect with the title: 3D graphical enhancements, power ups, gimmicks, challenging environments, plus the bonus of infinite levels for maximum scoring.

But, how did it play? At E3, not too great, but at CGExpo we were able to play a much improved version. They were able to smooth out the control, which was the main flaw in the first beta/E3 release. We have much higher hopes for it now. **Galaga: Destination Earth** will be available this Fall for the **PlayStation** and **PC**.

Breakout

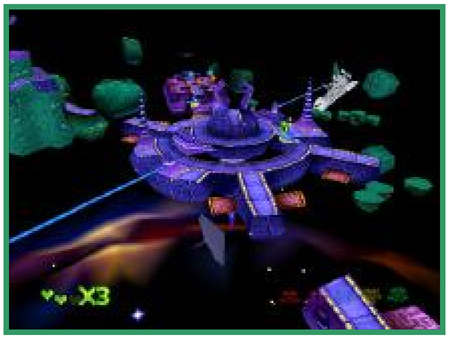


Pong the Paddle breaks out of his prison (he was a Ponglitical prisoner, I believe) and travels across many lands doing battle against knights, dragons, and the ever evil Tower of Pisa.

Graphically, this game is a stunner and it's a lot of fun to play. However, like its predecessor Pong, **Breakout** has some control problems when using the PlayStation controller. It's just too easy to miss that ball! We'd definitely recommend the PC version, as the mouse gives you precision control and sharper, more colorful graphics than its PlayStation counterpart.

Breakout will be available this Fall for your **PSX** or **PC.**

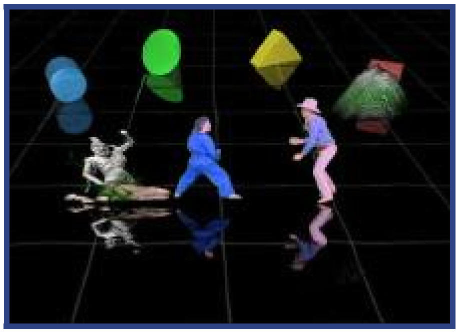
Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge



Frogger has returned and is holding his chin high after being critically browbeaten in his first Hasbro adventure. Critically slammed, yes, but the games flew off the store shelves in record numbers. So, it goes to show you...what do we know?

This time the frogging duties have been passed on to developer, Interactive Studios, and by the looks of things they've made some major improvements. The first Frogger had those wacky camera movements that caused your poor amphibian to accidentally commit suicide In Frogger 2 the camera is much more stable, thus making the game much more playable. The graphics are suitably enhanced and the levels are challenging without being totally impossible (like in the first!) **Frogger: Swampy's Revenge** will be available this Fall for the **PlayStation** and **PC**, and is rumored for the **Dreamcast.**

Hologram Time Traveler



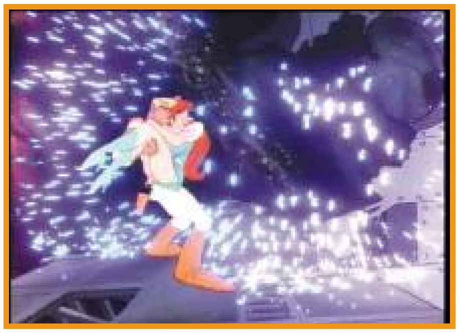
Remember **Hologram Time Traveler**? Go on, think about it...we'll wait right here. Yeah! That's the one! That hologram game that gave you headaches when you played it! Right! Well, get ready to play it again, only without the headaches.

The good folks at Digital Leisure have resurrected this rather obscure Sega arcade game and are making it available to play via your CD-Rom or DVD player. The object of the game is to travel through time to rescue the Princess of the Galactic Trade Federation. On your journey you'll do battle with cavemen, space knights, robots, ninjas, and other 3D nasties.

If you've never seen this game in person, you're missing out on quite an experience. Characters would appear on a tabletop as if R2-D2 himself were projecting them (but there was always that aforementioned headache effect). Luckily, the home version is playable in 2D or 3D via the 3D glasses included.

Hologram Time Traveler will be available this Fall on **CD-Rom** and **DVD.**

Dragon's Lair/Space Ace (DVD)

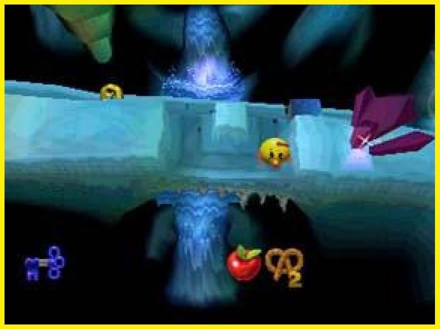


Other Digital Leisure releases for your DVD player are the original **Dragon's Lair**, **Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp,** and **Space Ace**.

By using your DVD remote control, you can make the split second decisions that will result in saving the heroine or lead you to your doom. All three games are the arcade perfect originals and include helpful hints to get you through your missions. Plus, as a bonus, you can simply "walk through" the game without having to play. Not that you would do that though, right?

DRAGON'S LAIR
SPACE ACE
DRAGON'S LAIR II
TIME WARP
DVD

Ms. Pac-Man: Maze Madness



Hot on the heels of their success with Pac-Man World, Namco is following up with **Ms. Pac-man Maze Madness**.

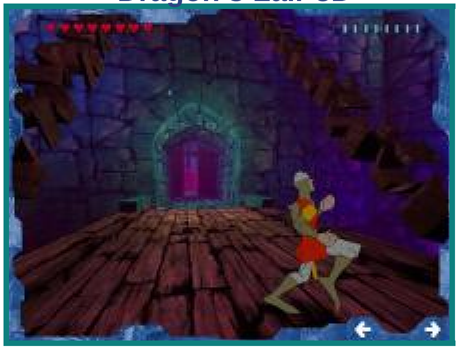
Solo gameplay features Ms. Pac-Man journeying through four worlds containing 12 stages, 4 hidden stages, 3 bonus round mini-games, a BOSS round, and a secret BOSS round. Ms. Pac will face 15 new enemies (in addition to the usual gang of ghosts) who block her path to the Witch's Castle, where she must defeat her foe and rescue Professor Pac and a princess.

Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness will feature multiplayer modes as well. Ghost Tag will allow one player to be "it" as Ms. Pac-Man, while the other players will be the ghosts trying to hunt her down. In Dot Mania, players compete to chow down the most dots in a maze.

Ms. Pac-Man: Maze Madness will be available this Fall for the **PlayStation, Nintendo 64** and **Sega Dreamcast.**

E3 2000 Classic Game Overviews

Dragon's Lair 3D

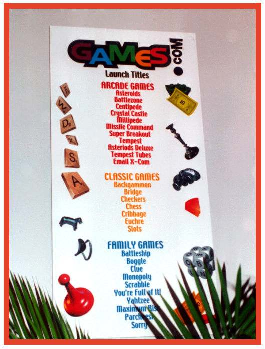


While the above frame looks like a cartoon...it isn't! After a long absence, Dirk the Daring is making his impressive return onto PC's in **Dragon's Lair 3D.** While this remake may look like its original laserdisc grandfather, it now features a fully explorable 3D environment. So, instead of slapping your joystick into the intended direction of movement, or pressing the "Sword" button, you will get to run around and hack things to bits. It's about as close as you can get to actually playing a cartoon; the graphics and environments are just that amazing.

Your object remains the same: rescue Princess Daphne from the castle of evil Singh the Dragon. Aside from a unique looking bevy of bad guys, Dirk will also face a series of challenging puzzles. Now bring on Space Ace 3D!!

Dragon's Lair 3D will be available Spring 2001 for the **PC** with rumored plans to port it to consoles.

Games.com



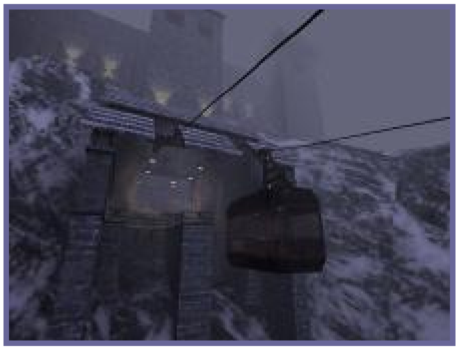
GAMES.COM
Launch Titles
ARCADE GAMES
Asteroids
Battlezone
Centipede
Crystal Castle
Millipede
Missile Command
Super Breakout
Tempest
Asteriods Deluxe
Tempest Tubes
Email X-Com
CLASSIC GAMES
Backgammon
Bridge
Checkers
Chess
Cribbage
Euchre
Slots
FAMILY GAMES
Battleship
Boggle
Clue
Monopoly
Scrabble
You're Full of It!
Yahtzee
Maximum Risk
Parcheesi
Sorry

Hasbro Interactive is giving classic gamers another means to play their arcade favorites. **Games.com**, which is set to launch early 2001, will offer gamers over 50 different games to play.

Games.com will support seven different online game channels including family, arcade, casino, gamer, sports, children, and game shows. Arcade games of the classic mix include **Asteroids, Battlezone**, **Tempest Tubes**, **Missile Command,** and many others. Fans of more traditional games will also be able to play their favorites such as Backgammon, Chess, Monopoly, Scrabble, Yahtzee, and Scrabble.

While their site is not operational yet, you can still visit it and sign up to be notified when the games will be ready to play. A soft launch of the site is expected later this fall just in case you're getting an itch to play Monopoly, Scrabble, Risk or Asteroids.

Return to Castle Wolfenstein



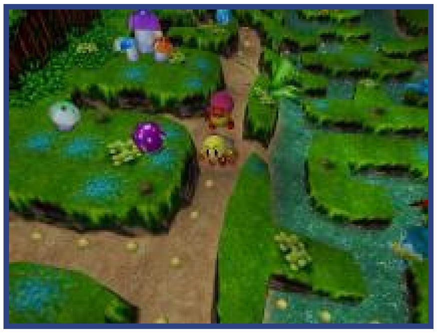
What's there not to enjoy in kicking some Nazi butt? Luckily for us we get to **Return to Castle Wolfenstein** and engage in such activities. Activision kept this first person shooter under wraps so well, that it came as a complete surprise to E3 show-goers.

Built with the Quake III Arena engine, it's no wonder the graphics are remarkably smooth and the gameplay looks utterly amazing. Unfortunately, screenshots have been amazingly scarce and the above one fails to do the game much justice. It does, however, show off the realistic lighting and textures rather well.

As B.J. Blaskowicz, your mission is to escape from your jail cell and start liquidating Nazi blockheads at will. From what we saw, just about every object is interactive, so feel free to toss some chairs at those fascist ne'r do wells.

Return to Castle Wolfenstein will be available Fall 2000 for the **PC.**

Pac-Man Adventures in Time



As reported in CGM #3, Mr. Pie-Sliced Yellow Head is traveling his way through time and onto a PC near you in **Pac-Man Adventures in Time**. It seems some uppity ghosts have done a number on Planet Pac-Man by stealing the five magical dots, which are vital to the Pac inhabitants' survival, and scattering them through five different time periods.

It's up to our dot addicted hero to bring peace to his planet by traveling through time (courtesy of Professor Pac-Man's time portals) and retrieving the dots. Pac will travel to Egypt, the old west, the future, prehistoric, and medieval times.

Hasbro has given Pac the usual 3D treatment, injected a lot of creativity, and yet has maintained the familiarity of the original. Of course, there is still lots of running, chasing, and chomping, but now Pac has the new trick of jumping over his pursuers.

The graphics are cartoonish and quite vibrant. It's also quite possibly the roundest looking Pac-Man we've ever seen, thanks to the game being PC specific.

Analysis: So far so good for Pac!

Pac-Man Adventures in Time will be available in September 2000 for your **PC**.

Greatest Arcade Hits (DC)

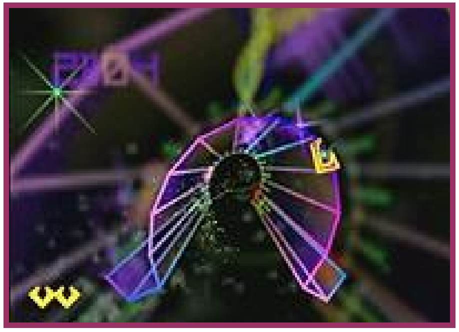
MIDWAY'S
GREATEST
ARCADE HITS
Volume 1
Sega Dreamcast
DEFENDER
JOUST
ROBOTRON
BUBBLES
SINISTAR
DEFENDER II

>yaawwn<. I think we've been here and done this before. If you already own this collection for your PlayStation, then you don't need it for your Dreamcast. If you already play it via MAME, then you *really* don't need it at all. Now, don't get us wrong, if you don't have these games in your possession, then we recommend you buy it.

Midway's Greatest Arcade Hits Volume 1 covers the same games yet again: **Defender, Joust, Robotron**, **Sinistar**, **Bubbles,** and **Defender II** (was Defender II a "hit"?). The emulation is acceptable, but the interface can be a bit on the cranky side. As for the games themselves, Robotron is just not Robotron without the dual arcade joystick experience. Defender, Defender II, Joust, and Bubbles are just as fun as ever, especially when playing Joust in 2 Player mode. Sinistar is still one of the best games ever, if only for the sheer terror you feel when the evil one himself announces, "Beware! I live!"

Midway's Greatest Arcade Hits Volume 1 is available now for your **Sega Dreamcast**.

Tempest 3000/Vm Labs



Ok, we admit that we were treated like kings by the VM Labs people. Heck, they even introduced us to Traci Lords in their V.I.P. lounge (see next page)! But, that aside, there is really nothing not to love about **VM Labs** and their **Nuon** technology.

Aside from allowing movie companies to create technologically enhanced DVD's, Nuon (formerly known as **Project X**) also caters to the more casual gamer. At the VM Labs booth, we were fortunate enough to meet with digital artist and Tempest 2000 creator, **Jeff Mintner,** showing off the new **Tempest 3000**. As expected, it's hypnotic, highly addictive, and as you can see in the above picture, looks even better than Tempest 2K.

NUON

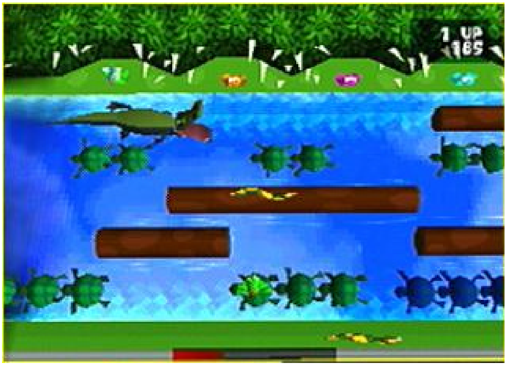
Return to Castle Wolfenstein
BLADE
Electronic Entertainment Expo
E3
™

ATARI
MB
MILTON BRADLEY
PARKER BROTHERS
TIGER
COLECO
ATARI

The Ultimate Videogame Company?

by Leonard Herman

Imagine if there was one company that fulfilled all the needs of all gamers, classic and current. Imagine if one company owned the rights to all the classic games and reissued them in contemporary and classic editions. Well, before you get your hopes too high, you may as well know that such a company does not exist. But what if there was one company today that has some involvement with nearly every console that ever existed? By all reasoning, this company would surely be the Ultimate Videogame Company. And this company does exist!



Frogger (Hasbro Interactive)

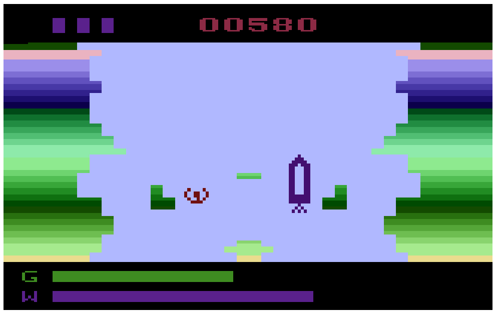
During the height of videogames' popularity, when every imaginable company was joining in, it was completely assumed that toy companies would be interested in claiming a piece of the videogame pie. Mattel, the number one toy company, wasted little time in creating an electronics division and diving right in. Other toy and game companies such as Coleco, Milton Bradley, and Parker Brothers followed suit.

Surprisingly, Hasbro, the second largest toy company, never joined the fray. Referred to as 'Has-Been' by its competitors, the Hasbro myth was that it was an old-fashioned company with absolutely no interest in electronic fads at all. The truth of the matter was that the company's CEO, Stephen Hassenfeld, wanted to jump on the electronic bandwagon all along. Unfortunately, Hassenfeld didn't trust his own designers to build a winning videogame system from scratch and he wasn't thrilled with the concepts that independent developers offered him. So Hasbro stayed away from the electronic industry during the early eighties.

Hasbro formally entered the electronic age in 1988. Under a new division imaginatively named Hasbro Electronics, the company planned to market a new interactive console called *Control-Vision*, which had been developed by Nolan Bushnell's company, Axlon. Unlike the existing consoles, the Control-Vision was going to use videotapes. Axlon developed a compression routine that allowed five full-motion video tracks and sixteen digital audio tracks to be crammed together on one videotape without any quality loss. The system could switch back and forth between the 21 tracks instantaneously. Hasbro claimed that the new system would be a cross between a movie and a videogame and produced two live-action games at a cost of $4.5 million.

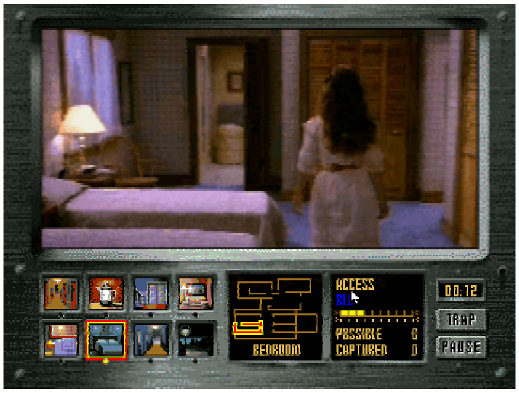
Hasbro had hoped to sell the system for $200 and intended to market it directly against the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). Unfortunately, the cost of dynamic RAM (DRAM) was more expensive than Hasbro had anticipated and there was no way that the company could sell the system for under $300. Nobody at Hasbro or Axlon felt that the Control-Vision could ever succeed at that price so the project, as well as Hasbro's hope of being a major force in the electronic arena, was scrapped.

In a classic rags-to-riches type story, today Hasbro is one of the leading software developers in the world. Through many acquisitions, the companies under the Hasbro umbrella own the majority of games that were available during the early eighties. But Hasbro's reign doesn't only cover the classic games. Hasbro owns several companies that played a part in the videogame resurgence of the late eighties.



River Patrol (TigerVision)

Hasbro reentered the electronic gaming forum in 1995 when it formed Hasbro Interactive. The company quickly created a niche for itself by releasing computer versions of practically every board game in its catalog. Then, in 1997, it released *Frogger* for the PlayStation and PC. After the game sold millions of copies, Hasbro Interactive knew for certain that there was money to be made with well-known classic games. The company decided to go after bigger fish.



Night Trap (Hasbro/Sega CD)

In 1998, Hasbro Interactive purchased the remnants of Atari from JTS Corporation for a mere $5,000,000. Hasbro Interactive's plan was to update such well-known titles as *Missile Command*, *Centipede*, and *Pong*.

Owning the Atari catalog alone would have given Hasbro the title of being the 'Ultimate Gaming Company.' And since the company also owned all of Atari's consoles from the JTS deal, it could theoretically re-release the 2600/7800 and 5200 with enough software to keep potential hardware customers supplied with 'new' software for many years.

And what about the third party titles? Well Hasbro owns much of those too.

The Parker Brothers titles could be available since Parker Brothers is a division of Hasbro. In fact it was one of those Parker Brothers titles, *Frogger*, that set Hasbro Interactive on its retro awakening.

Parker Brothers' perpetual rival had always been that other Massachusetts-based game company, Milton Bradley. And naturally Milton Bradley had also jumped on the 2600 bandwagon, releasing a couple of lame games (with some really strange controllers). Well, since Milton Bradley is also a Hasbro company, those titles could be available if Hasbro ever decided to re-release its classic consoles.

Avalon-Hill was a third board game company but in a different league than Parker Brothers or Milton Bradley. This company produced games that appealed to strategists rather than the family-oriented games being produced by its competitors. And for a short while Avalon-Hill also put out a slew of Atari 2600-compatible games such as *London Blitz* and *Out of Control*. Because these games weren't distributed as widely as those by other companies, Avalon-Hill 2600 games are generally pretty rare today. But since Avalon-Hill is now a Hasbro company, there's no reason why it couldn't re-release its catalog of games.

game.com (Tiger Electronics)

Tigervision's River Patrol recently sold on eBay for $800. Well if our scenario came true and Hasbro Interactive re-released the 2600, there would be nothing to stop Tiger Electronics from re-releasing its line of 2600 games. After all, Tiger Electronics is a part of Hasbro.

There are other third party 2600 titles whose current ownership is questionable. When Selchow & Righter (publisher of Trivial Pursuit and Scrabble) went bankrupt, their assets were purchased by Coleco. Among them was the Scrabble-based 2600 game, *Glib*. And when Coleco went bankrupt in 1989, guess who was there to purchase its assets for $85 million? Hasbro, of course. The belief is that Hasbro does not currently own the rights to the Coleco videogames. But if it doesn't, who does?

Thanks to the Atari acquisition, Hasbro owns the rights to all of Atari's consoles. Hasbro owns other consoles also and nearly every videogame console has benefited from products released by companies that now fall under the Hasbro umbrella. Although Hasbro's ownership of the Colecovision is questioned, the console can play games that were produced by Parker Brothers. Intellivision owners have also been able to play Parker Brothers games.

Hasbro even has a major interest in the portable market. The company owns the Microvision, the world's first programmable handheld console, through its Milton Bradley division. (Hasbro doesn't own the Vectrex, which Milton Bradley acquired when it purchased General Consumer Electronics (GCE). When the unit was discontinued, all of its rights reverted back to its original developers. Hasbro also owns the rights to two other portables: the Atari Lynx and the Tiger game.com, furthering Hasbro's title as the Ultimate Videogame Company.

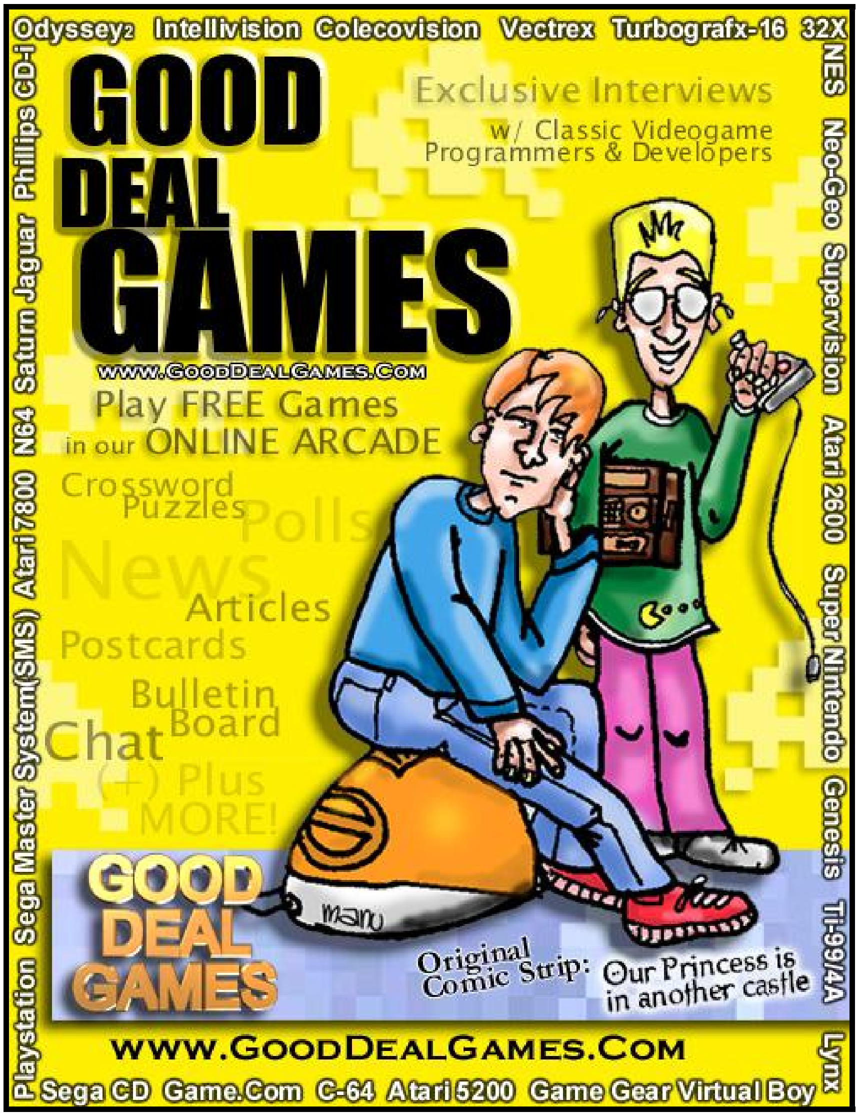
Microvision (Milton Bradley)

When it comes to the modern consoles, Hasbro again is no slouch. In addition to releasing software for all of today's three systems (PlayStation, N64, and Dreamcast), the company's Galoob subsidiary was responsible for bringing the Game Genie to America. And if we really want to get technical, Hasbro's Tonka division once distributed the Sega Master System. And Hasbro also has the future in mind by announcing games for the X-Box, PlayStation 2, Dolphin, and Nuon game systems.

Hasbro also had a major impact on the way games are displayed to the public. One of the games that Hasbro created for the ill-fated Control-Vision was *Night Trap*, a game that was later released for the Sega CD and one of the primary games which influenced the current videogame rating system.

After an unsuccessful early bid at joining the videogame race, Hasbro has turned around to become a major impact in both the current and retro markets. It has truly become The Ultimate Videogame Company.

CGM


Odyssey2 Intellivision Colecovision Vectrex Turbografx-16 32X
NES Neo-Geo Supervision Atari 2600 Super Nintendo Genesis TI-99/4A Lynx
Playstation Sega Master System(SMS) Atari 7800 N64 Saturn Jaguar Phillips CD-i
Sega CD Game.Com C-64 Atari 5200 Game Gear Virtual Boy
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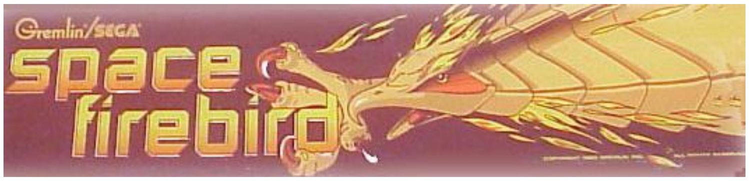
LOST Arcade Classic

by Kyle Snyder



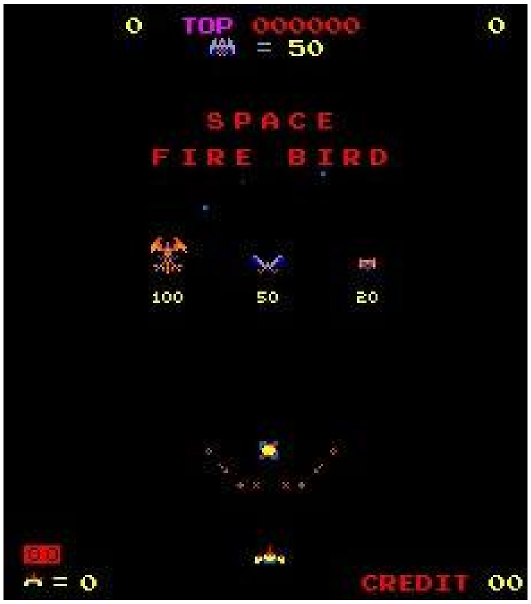
Space Firebird is a game that seemed to taunt me for several summers. From the summer of '81 through sometime in '83, I would always run across a Space Firebird machine when I either didn't have a quarter or didn't have the time to stop and play. The 7-11 on the corner had one for a while, and Marie's Restaurant had one for a short time as a replacement for their Pac-Man machine, which was getting repaired. Even our local A&P grocery store had a Space Firebird for about a year, but by that time my mother favored Safeway, and I never got to go into the A&P to see what it was about.

This troubled me. I believed that I knew everything there was to know about the games of that era, but I had to shrug and admit ignorance of this simple wood-grained cabinet with the red and orange marquee. Later on, I found salvation.

The summer of '85 included my attendance at a "Summer Science Camp" at the local community college. Sure, we had great times like the scavenger hunt in the woods ("Is that a sparrow's feather??? THIRTY POINTS!!!"), and the time we got to dissect little formaldehyde-soaked foot-long sharks. This is where I learned that a shark's heart (at least that particular species...) is a beautiful light blue color. But I digress.

This community college had a game room that stemmed off from the cafeteria. It had several ping-pong tables, a pool table, and about ten arcade games. Among them, you guessed it, Space Firebird! I was finally able to quench my long-standing thirst for the game that had eluded me for so long!

Space Firebird was one of the many Space Invaders inspired "slide and shoots" that populated arcades of the early 80's. You had your player-controlled gun ship that moved left and right at the base of the screen, firing missiles upwards at an ever changing army of flying creatures. But there was something about Space Firebird that drew me in more than any other game of its type.



First, when the game begins, your ears are treated to sounds that can best be described as an electronic re-creation of an office water cooler. This is not a bad thing. This sound is one of the most charming in the classic arcade universe. Your eyes move toward the top of the screen, where some tiny red spots emerge and become the first wave of the enemy firebirds. The first thing you notice is that these avians have varying degrees of armor and plumage, based on rank. The vast majority of the birds are identified as "gulls." Gulls are small red or blue birds that are felled with one well timed shot from your base. These privates in the bird army are responsible for most of the clusters of red bombs shot back down at you.

The gulls report directly to the Eagles; (not rock legends Glenn Frey and Don Henley) larger birds with multiple colored feathers that take two direct hits to extinguish. The attack formations usually consist of anything from three to eight gulls, with one or sometimes two eagles along for good measure. They swoop and dive in elegant patterns, sometimes incorporating loops into their avian flight. Without warning, the whole group will dive into the path of the player's missile base. Best to get the hell out of the way, or blast them as they circle round the top of the screen. If you can manage to squeeze off a few rounds as they circle overhead, you will get 20 points per gull and 50 per eagle. This can add up quite quickly.

Occasionally, an Emperor firebird will appear to challenge the player. The golden emperors are the generals in the firebird fleet. They tend to fly slowly and low, taunting the player. As you would expect from a general, they are heavily armored and laborious to kill. It takes four shots to destroy an Emperor, but at 100 points, it's well worth the risk.

As the game progresses, the birds periodically release brightly colored nuclear bombs, which slowly fall into your zone of movement, sending a deep warning echo from the speakers of the game. These bombs detonate automatically when about an inch from your range, sending shrapnel in all directions. Shooting the bomb high in the sky still rains down shrapnel, but you have an extra second to dodge the chunks of deadly material. Plus, you are awarded a variable bonus of 50 to 200 points (obviously drawing inspiration from the "mystery ship" in Space Invaders).

There is a good side to all this. The programmers realized that with such formidable forces against you, they had better balance the playing field. Instead of just the standard missiles to fire, a second offense is generously provided. The "warp" button on the control panel ignites your rocket engines and enables a protective shield that surrounds your base. However, your craft only holds enough fuel to make one full pass from the bottom of the screen to the top of the screen, where you fly off and "wrap around" to the bottom again. Perhaps that part of the universe was suffering through a gas hike like we are right now! No matter. This warp function allows you to guide your ship directly into the swarm of firebirds, obliterating any nasties that you collide with.

An additional defensive maneuver has been programmed in as well. As you approach either side of the screen, your ship will angle upward slightly, allowing you to slide past the missiles and diving birds that attempt to trap you. It's a nice touch that separates this "invasion" game from all the others of that era.

During that summer science camp, I quickly became the best player at Space Firebird and regularly advanced up to the twentieth level or so. I probably could've played for longer, but lunch break at camp was only so long.

I have recently found that Nintendo programmed the original Space Firebird machines (presumably for Asian release), but that Sega/Gremlin licensed the title for release in America. Funny that at one point in video game history, Nintendo and Sega actually cooperated in a business venture.

Space Firebird was never adapted for any home video game systems then or now, and can only be played as a downloaded ROM for MAME. I recommend you give it a try whenever you can.

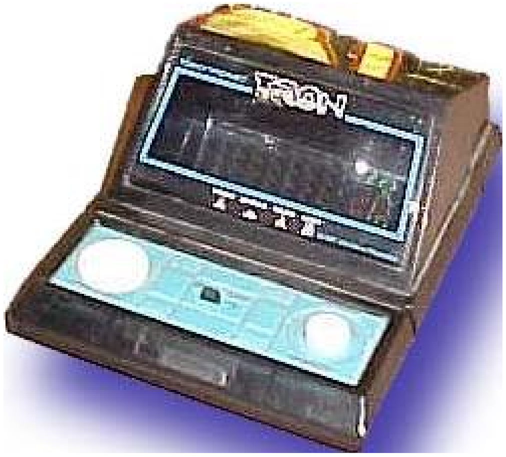
Personally, I am negotiating with the college to buy that same Space Firebird machine I played 15 summers ago. They've had it in storage for the past 10 years, along with old books and file cabinets. Just an attempt to bring an old friend home.

space firebird

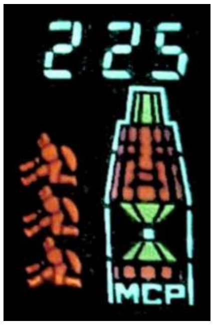
TOYS OF TRON

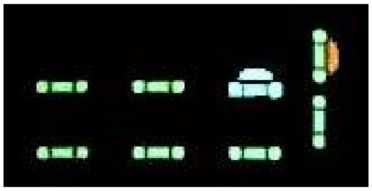
By Earl Green

In the summer of 1982, there was no hotter ticket in Hollywood than a new Disney movie that boasted impressive computer graphics, including some scenes created entirely with computer animation. The movie, of course, was Tron, and although it ended up as more of a cult classic than a mainstream blockbuster, the buzz surrounding its special effects (in an age where the public's imagination was sparked by the emergence of PCs the way the internet is today) and the Disney name made it a marketing bonanza.



Tomy quickly latched on to the U.S. toy rights, producing a quartet of action figures unlike anything seen on the market before. The nature of the movie's visuals made it tough to figure out how any toys would be made: the characters glowed, their faces were more or less in black and white (tinted only by the color of their "circuitry's" glow), and their circuit patterns were very intricate. This was going to be a *huge* challenge for a toy industry that was still stamping printed labels onto hollow cylinders to create a barely passable likeness of R2-D2.



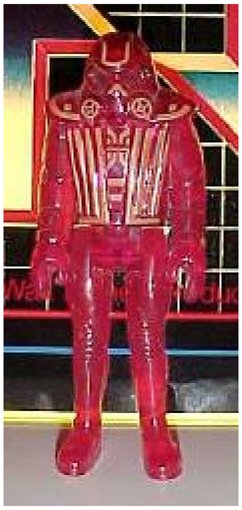


Tomy's solution was unorthodox and generated a love-or-hate response to the toys among Tron fans. While there *was* facial detail in the Tron action figures, the detail existed only in the sculpting, for there wasn't much of a paint job. The figures were molded in translucent, colored plastic, which would allow light to shine through, and the only detail on the figures was a vastly simplified, painted-on version of each character's unique circuitry. Each figure came with one glow-in-the-dark accessory; either a disc weapon (which could be held edge-on in the figure's hands, or by the peg which secured it to the character's backs) or, for the Warrior, a staff.

Accompanying the four figures, Tron, Flynn, Sark, and a generic Warrior, was an excellent replica of the light cycles from one of the film's all-computer-animated sequences. The light cycle toy came in yellow or red and today is even more highly sought-after than the figures themselves.

But Tomy didn't end their relationship with the Tron license there. Of all the variations of Tron games that collectors and gamers have chased after and played, possibly the rarest is Tomy's hand-held Tron game. Also molded in translucent plastic, this LED game did one better than many of the cartridge games by including three unique games in one - not unlike the arcade game!

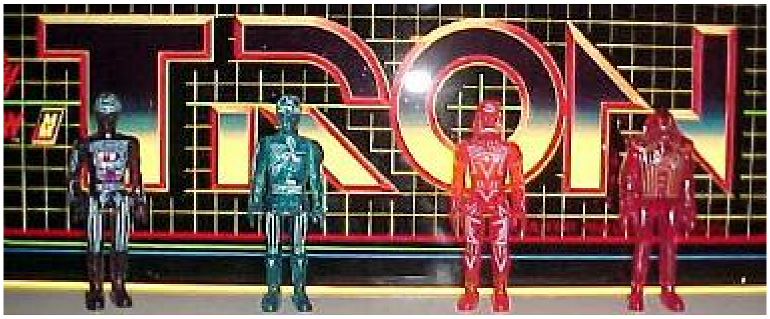
The handheld's first stage pits you against enemy light cycles, and with only directional controls and the action button as an accelerator, it's a *bear* to beat. The second screen matches Tron against Sark from opposite ends of the screen in a disc-flinging duel to the death. Finally, with Sark out of the way, Tron must try to destroy the MCP by throwing his disc into the core. The MCP's ever-shifting defensive walls make timing critical in this stage.



The sequence of events in the Tomy handheld make it, almost embarrassingly, closer to the plot of the actual movie than *any* of the other games, arcade or cartridge!

While I'm reluctant to praise any LED-based game for its "graphics," Tomy did find an ingenious way to double the light cycle-shaped elements for the discs as well.

Though the toys and handheld game associated with Tron haven't gone down in poseable plastic history as successfully as playthings derived from certain other sci-fi franchises, the toys of Tron continue to be sought by collectors, fans, *and* classic gamers alike.

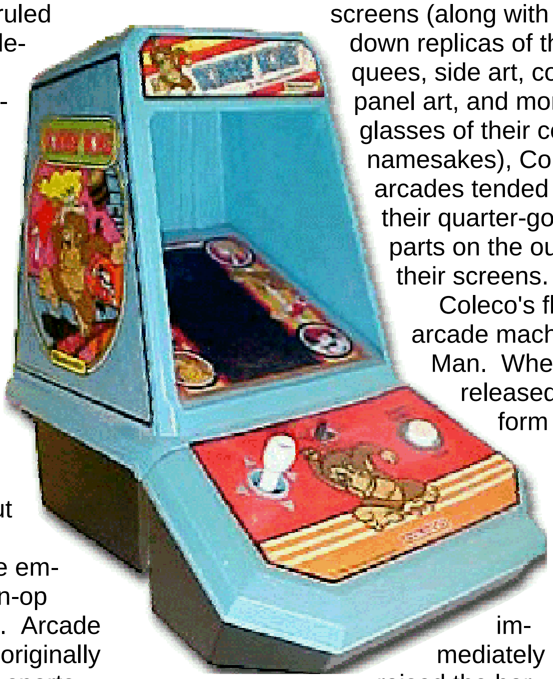


The Next Best Thing to Being There

by Earl Green

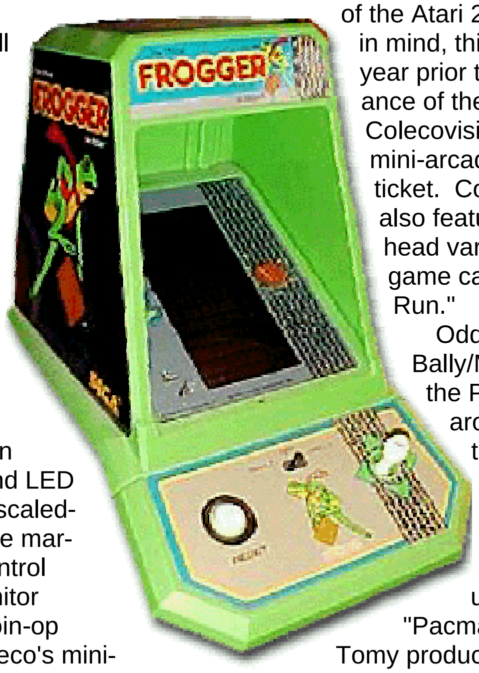
Once upon a time, many years before Game Boy Color, MAME, and Namco Museum, there were low-end console games and there were battery-operated LED-display games. Back then, it was roughly an equal trade-off. Did you prefer blocky, clunky graphics that moved with some semblance of fluidity, or more colorful, elaborate graphics that didn't really "move" at all?

Handhelds and tabletop games had grown in popularity since the 70s, though most of them were based on sports. Mattel's multiple football, baseball, and basketball LED games ruled the market, despite their graphics consisting of scarcely more than glowing dashes or plusses (not even as elaborate as the average pocket calculator).



Space Invaders brought about a drastic change in the emphasis of coin-op video games. Arcade games were originally variations on sports (basketball, football, racing games, etc.), but Space Invaders demonstrated the possibilities of simulating events that were beyond the average arcade customer's experience. Companies such as Entex quickly pumped LED-display Space Invaders lookalikes into the toy market and met with some success. Other electronic games such as Simon and Merlin (not to mention Mattel's unending stream of sports games) perpetuated the market for handhelds.

Some larger games were too big for small hands to hold onto, and these games tended to sit in one's lap or on a nearby surface - hence, tabletop games.

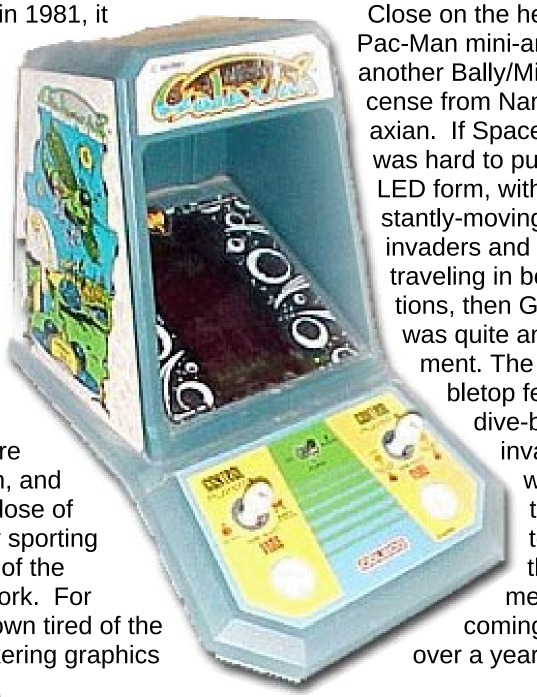


Among the most successful and high-profile electronic games of the early 1980s were Coleco's half-dozen mini-arcade games. Sporting scaled-down joysticks, buttons, and LED screens (along with scaled-down replicas of the marquees, side art, control panel art, and monitor glasses of their coin-op namesakes), Coleco's mini-arcades tended to look more like their quarter-gobbling counterparts on the outside than on their screens.

Coleco's flagship mini-arcade machine was Pac-Man. When this game was released in miniature form in 1981, it immediately raised the bar for tabletops and handhelds.

Coleco's mini-arcades each had a "hood," which deflected annoying glare from the LED screen, and they added a huge dose of arcade ambience by sporting small-scale replicas of the games' original artwork. For gamers who had grown tired of the decidedly lo-res flickering graphics of the Atari 2600 (and keep in mind, this was at least a year prior to the appearance of the 5200 or the Colecovision), the Coleco mini-arcades were *the* ticket. Coleco's Pac-Man also featured a head-to-head variation, and a game called "Eat and Run."

Oddly enough, Bally/Midway spread the Pac-Man license around liberally in the handheld and portable market. Entex produced a handheld LCD unit called "Pacman 2," while Tomy produced a different Pac-Man tabletop in a bright yellow, oval-shaped unit. Nelsonic turned out a decent Pac-Man game watch, though the watch's maze more closely resembled something out of the Odyssey 2 game K.C. Munchkin than anything you'd ever see playing Pac-Man.

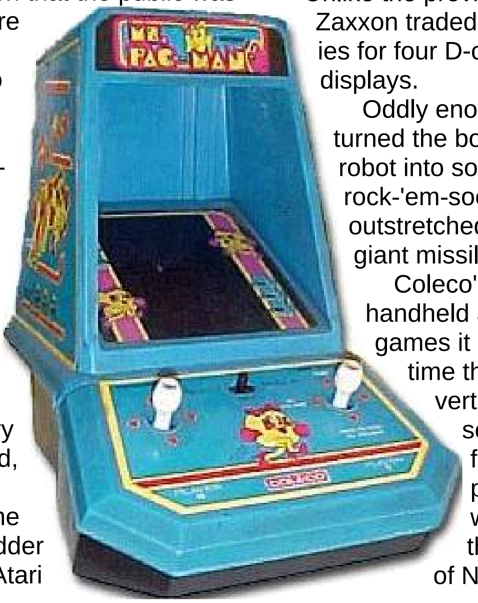


Close on the heels of the Pac-Man mini-arcade was another Bally/Midway license from Namco, Galaxian. If Space Invaders was hard to pull off in LED form, with its constantly-moving mass of invaders and laser blasts traveling in both directions, then Galaxian was quite an achievement. The Coleco tabletop featured the dive-bombing invaders, but it was sometimes hard to track their movement or incoming fire. For over a year, this was

the *only* home version of Galaxian on the market until Atari's cartridge version hit the shelves around 1983. Like Pac-Man, there was a head-to-head version of Galaxian in which the object of the game was for both players to become terminally confused as to which of the ships they're controlling. Galaxian is generally regarded as the hardest-to-find (and therefore most valuable) of the Coleco mini-arcades, with eBay auctions for Galaxians sometimes climbing into the steep hundreds for specimens in excellent condition.

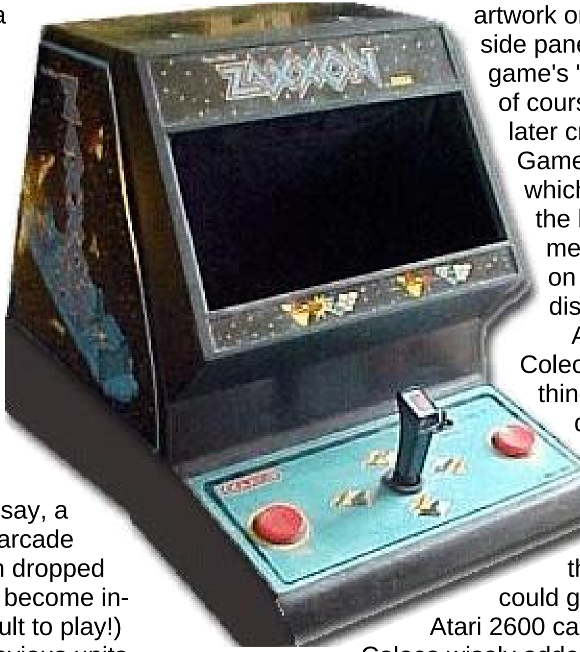
The following year, Coleco followed its first two mini-arcades with three additional games. The first pair had sold reasonably well, given that their price tag of $45 to $70 per game put them almost in direct competition with the average $200 console (to which additional games could be added). And with the next-generation consoles on the horizon, the price of a new Atari 2600 was starting to drop well below the $200 mark. Why spend $70 on a machine that could only play one game?

The first two games clearly supported the notion that the public was demanding more mini-arcades. The next hits to be miniaturized were Donkey Kong and Frogger. Coleco held the overall license for home versions of Donkey Kong, and though the big ape's mini-arcade was very nicely packaged, the game play was lower on the evolutionary ladder than even the Atari 2600 version. Frogger, on the other hand, was as close to perfect as any of the mini-arcades got - bright, colorful graphics, music that was as close to the arcade game's jaunty opening tune as you could get, and decent game play.



Ms. Pac-Man was the next game to receive the mini-arcade treatment. Like her beau, Ms. Pac-Man sported head-to-head and "Eat and Run" versions of the game, though this game wasn't vastly different from its predecessor.

Around the same time as Ms. Pac-Man hit the shelves, Coleco unleashed a miniature version of possibly the *last* game, next only to Dragon's Lair, that anyone expected to see as a mini-arcade: Zaxxon. Zaxxon was crammed into a larger-than-usual mini-arcade cabinet, but with good reason. In order to even come within a thousand miles of the arcade game's then-eye-popping graphics, the Zaxxon tabletop utilized *two* LED screens whose displays were combined with the use of mirrors. (Needless to say, a Zaxxon mini-arcade that has been dropped has probably become incredibly difficult to play!) Unlike the previous units, Zaxxon traded in four C-cell batteries for four D-cells to drive its twin displays.



Oddly enough, Zaxxon also turned the boxy end-of-level killer robot into something resembling a rock-'em-sock-'em robot with an outstretched fist, rather than a giant missile.

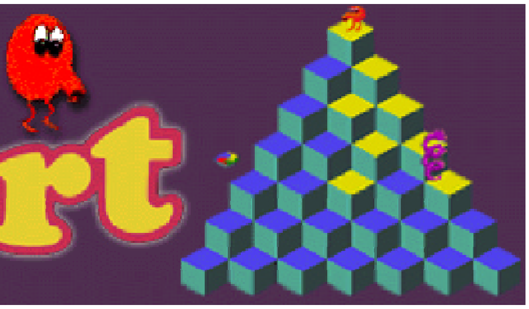
Coleco's final entry in the handheld arena (a line of games it abandoned about the time the company also diverted all of its other resources toward the ill-fated ADAM computer/console system) was another larger-than-usual mini-arcade of Nintendo's Donkey Kong Jr. This final game showed some intriguing indications of where Coleco might have gone with the mini-arcade machines: a skylight-style panel in the top of the game's "hood" provided some of the light for the LED display, and an alarm clock was built into the machine. The game was an adequate translation of its source material, if one took the limitations of portable games of that era into account. (At least it was better than the Donkey Kong mini-arcade.)

Other companies followed Coleco's lead. Entex licensed some rather obscure arcade titles, such as “Spiders," and turned them into tabletop LED games that were vaguely similar in shape to the Coleco mini-arcades. Parker Brothers' Q*Bert tabletop shared Coleco's trend of putting stickers with colorful arcade artwork on the top and side panels of the game's "screen." And of course, Nintendo later created the Game & Watch line, which reinvented the handheld as a medium based on liquid crystal displays.

At the time, Coleco had a good thing going. LED displays could never hope to capture the fluidity of graphics that gamers could get even with Atari 2600 cartridges. But Coleco wisely added the cabinet art from the original arcade games, and the result was a series of tabletop games, which in some cases, traded off gameplay for atmosphere. In 2000, it will still cost you several hundred dollars to buy or build a fully working arcade classic, but when Coleco's mini-arcades were new items in toy stores, working arcade machines had price tags in the low to mid thousands. The mini-arcades were the closest you could get to the "feel" of the arcade - you could turn out the lights and see a colorful glow from the hooded screens. And, the biggest relief of all, once you paid for a roomful of Coleco mini-arcades, you didn't have to beg Mom and Dad for another batch of quarters.

Qa$hinG In on Q*bert

By
Earl Green

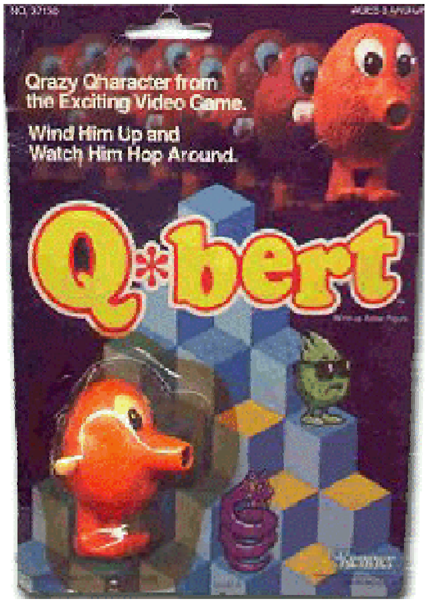


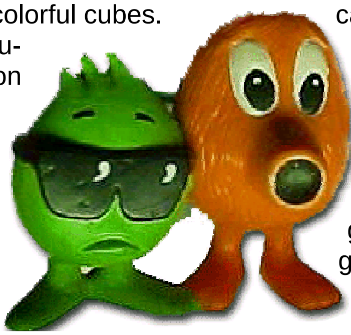
Let's say you're a major toy manufacturer named Kenner. Let's say it's late 1983, and your last big license - a little summer flick called "Return of the Jedi" - is now but a memory, with no sequels in sight. TV is a barren wasteland of variety shows and programming that just doesn't lend itself to toys.

What do you do? Why, you hitch a ride aboard a multicolored disk carrying a little orange guy with a big nose! This guy's gonna be a star!

Q*Bert was premiered by Gottlieb in 1983 to a great deal of hype, and it wasn't without reason. This intensely cute, easy-to-learn-but-hard-to-beat coin-op featured a large cast of memorable, and thus marketable, characters. And the game was a success the moment it hit the arcades. Toy licenses, among other things, were a natural evolution for Q*Bert and his qonglomeration of qo-stars.

Kenner aimed for both the boys' and girls' toy markets with different variations on Q*Bert. Ten-inch and foot-tall plush versions of the great orange one, complete with squeaky noses (!), could be found in toy stores, along with a series of small, solid PVC figurines, and a wind-up "hopper." The wind-up “hopper” would bounce across your table—all that was missing was a pyramid of colorful cubes.





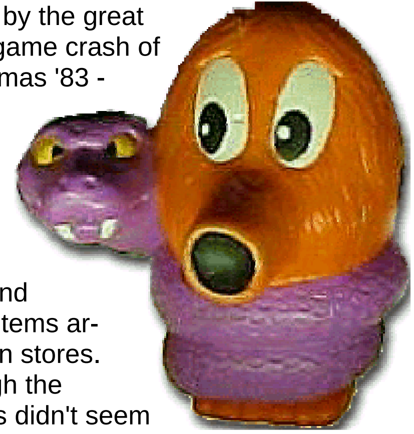
Some of the figurines were based on characters and situations from the game - Q*Bert on a disk, Q*Bert in the clutches of Coily, and Q*Bert standing next to Slick (the little green bastard who goes around changing the colors of your cubes). Other figurines took a little more artistic license, such as Q*Bert on a skateboard wearing a walkman, Q*Bert with a baseball cap on his head (and a baseball lodged in his nose), and so forth.

Toy giant Kenner wasn't the only company to pony up some big bucks to peddle a guy who constantly says "@#$*@!" to kids. Q*Bert Colorforms sets, T-shirts, pencil toppers, Frisbees (some of which were modeled after the game's colorful last-resort-escape disks), and other items were made available. And of course, there was the cartoon.

Parker Brothers snagged the license for actual Q*Bert games and quickly turned out very good cartridges for the Atari 2600 and 5200, Intellivision, ColecoVision, and even - though it's astoundingly rare - an Odyssey 2 version. Parker Brothers also came up with a board game and an LED tabletop game in much the same style as Coleco's mini-arcade games. Though the game bore authentic side art that displayed Q*Bert employing a colorful metaphor, the score display simply said "OUCH" when Q*Bert was quashed by Coily in the tabletop version.

All the industry insider predictions said that Q*Bert would be the next Pac-Man. All the elements seemed to be falling into place. These companies were ready for Q*Bert to hop into their bank accounts and start spewing cash - rather than mock profanity - from that increasingly famous single nostril. (Pretty disturbing image, isn't it?)

Sadly, all of these manufacturers who gave up a hefty chunk of change for the license to make Q*Bert products were caught off guard by the great videogame crash of Christmas '83 - precisely when a lot of these toys and other items arrived in stores. Though the games didn't seem to lose their popularity, it became harder to sell items based on video game properties. Indeed, the 1983/84 holiday season was the last hurrah for toys based on videogames until the heyday of Mario and Luigi a few years later.



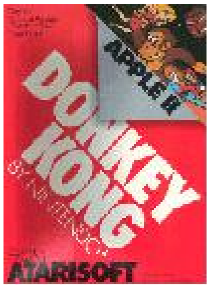
While Bally/Midway, Namco, and their licensees cleaned up on Pac-Man paraphernalia at the beginning of the video game boom, Q*Bert and his qohorts quickly became qasualties of the end of that boom. It's a shame, too, because the follow-up game, Q*Bert's

Qubes, introduced even *more* characters that could have quickly turned the Q*Bert property into an infinitely franchise-able commodity. One need only look at the even newer batch of fresh characters in the recent PlayStation and PC remakes of Q*Bert to consider the unachieved toy/collectible potential of the game.

Q*Bert now spends his time working for Hasbro, where, if you're *really* unlucky, you may find him putting the "cuss" into the customer service line.

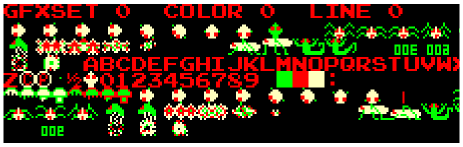
Q*bert
Q*bert

CLASSIC
EASTER EGGS

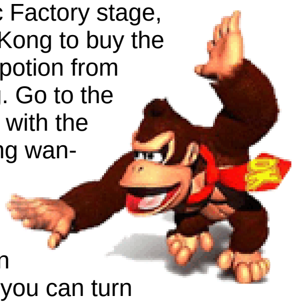


Donkey Kong (Apple II)
During gameplay, press '1' to give yourself up to 255 Mario's (after 255 it will roll over to zero). Press '2' to toggle invincibility On/Off.

Centipede (Arcade/MAME)
After loading Centipede In MAME, press the F4 key. Check out the pattern tables and you'll see a grasshopper. A grasshopper was planned for the original version but was taken out for the final release.



Donkey Kong 64 (N64)
In the Frantic Factory stage, use Donkey Kong to buy the Gorilla Grab potion from Cranky Kong. Go to the wooden pole with the large Kremling wandering around it. Climb the pole, then run forward until you can turn left. You will now be in a room with boxes, and a Donkey Kong arcade machine. Pull the lever and Go Mario, Go!



Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure (Jaguar)
To play the 2600 version of Pitfall on the JAGUAR Pitfall, go to the main menu, select "info", press the C button 26 times, then down!
Submitted by Randy Femrite

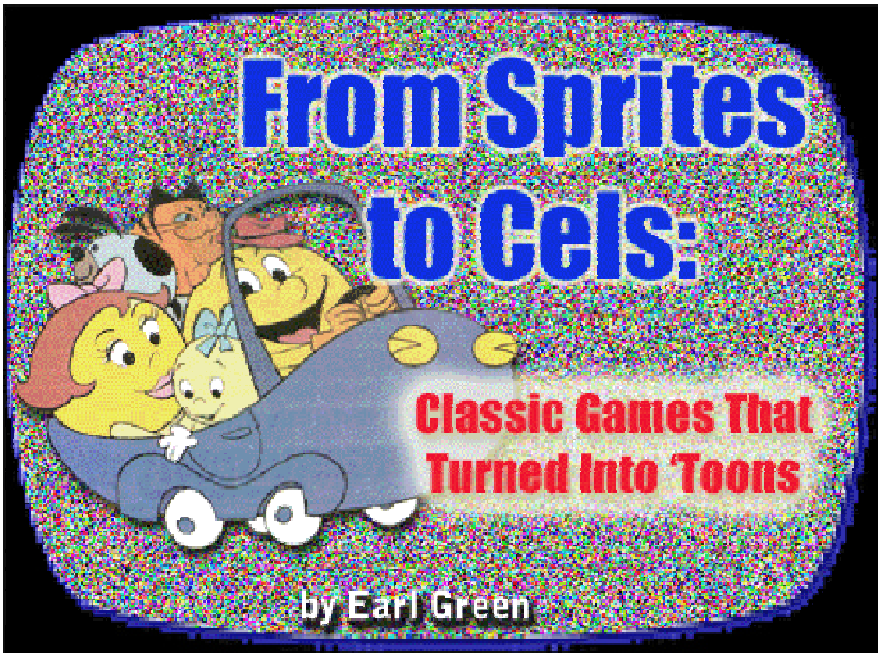
Arcade's Greatest Hits: The Williams Collection 1 (PSX)
Once you begin playing any game, press L1 + L2. When the option screen appears, press the "x" button to gain access to the cheat menu.

Bomberman 64 (N64)
Want some secret levels? When the main menu appears, press the "Start" button repeatedly until you hear a chime sound. Gotta be quick, though!

War Room (Colecovision)
According to the game's designer, Bob Harris, "During gameplay, visit cities, in order, with initial letters R-O-S-H-A (ROSHA is Bob Harris' nickname). You are presented with a screen telling you the author's name and some of his opinions. Following this, all the city names change to jokes (e.g. LA becomes SmogLand), and some additional play features are enabled."

Have an Easter Egg or cheat code you want to share? Send it on in and we'll print it here.

E-mail it to:
cav@classicgamer.com



From Sprites to Cels:

Classic Games That Turned Into 'Toons

by Earl Green

Any look back at classic video game merchandising would be remiss in its duties if it didn't mention some of the most highly visible - and yet least memorable - spinoffs: Saturday morning cartoons.

Video games had quickly been picked up as a theme in cartoons; does anyone remember the awful Super Friends episode where our heroes are miniaturized and chased around a maze by a huge, omnivorous, blue Pac-Man controlled by a diabolical mad scientist? No? Then you're lucky. There was actually such a cartoon, but trust me, it's not the sort of thing you'd **want** to remember.

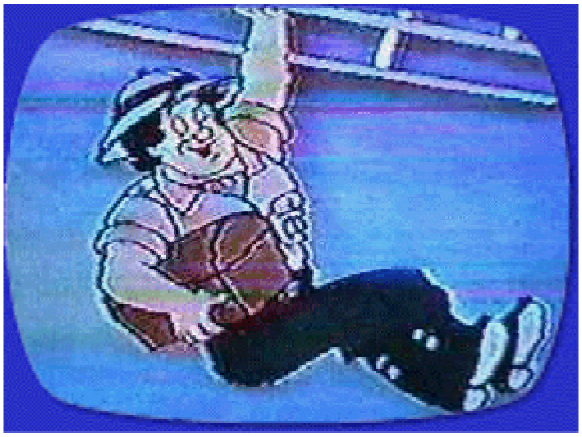
But then again, the same applies to some of the cartoons which were actually licensed by various video game makers.

Naturally, Pac-Man was the first to appear, premiering in 1983 on ABC. The pilot episode actually aired first in prime time, during a preview special with several other kids' shows, and this pilot episode was the **only** instance in which Pac-Man ever got chomped on screen.

Perhaps the ABC brass thought this was objectionable or scary for youngsters. (And some ten years later, they didn't think the sight of Dennis Franz's butt would scare or offend us as adults?!? But I digress.) As some expected, the subsequent episodes of Pac-Man spiraled downhill quickly, essentially turning into a clone of Popeye: swap out the sailor man for the round yellow one, Olive Oyl for Ms. Pac, Swee'pea for Baby Pac, and spinach for power pellets; add a dash of the Three Stooges for the ghosts' camaraderie (or lack thereof), and you've got - in a nutshell - Pac-Man the cartoon.

Perhaps even more surprising than the fact that this thing stayed on the air for more than one year was the fact that Bally/Midway and Namco turned around and modeled the "Pac-Land" arcade game on the TV show - complete with theme song! A game, based on a cartoon, based on a game? Don't even try to keep up with it. A later and much more obscure game called "Pac-Man and Chomp-Chomp" also borrowed from the cartoon.

CBS was the next network to cash in on the arcade action with its Saturday morning programming block called "Saturday Supercade." Long before Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong were brought to life in Re-Boot-style CGI, Donkey Kong and Donkey Kong Jr. had their own separate cartoons on CBS, along with Q*Bert and Frogger. The video-game-themed 'toons offered by CBS did little to improve on the animated incarnation of Pac-Man.



Adventures of Pitfall Harry

Frogger played the role of a newspaper reporter in a swamp occupied by fellow amphibians (and was cancelled pretty quickly). Q*Bert went from profanity-spouting to plain-bread in his segment, which showed the noser as a teenager in a 50's-style high school (with Coily the snake and his cohorts as the school bullies). The cartoon based on Donkey Kong paired the ape with rival Mario and Mario's girlfriend as a sort of reluctant Odd Couple, while Donkey Kong Jr. searched for his father with the help of a motorcycle-riding pal with a knack for getting into trouble.

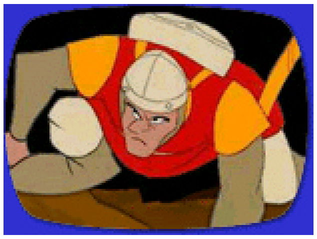
Not all of the Saturday Supercade shows survived. "Frogger" and "Q*Bert" were early casualties, replaced by cartoons based on "Pitfall!" and the Don Bluth animated laserdisc game, "Space Ace."

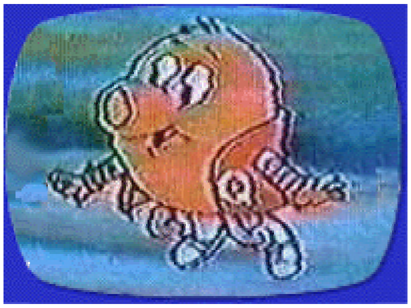
On the subject of "Space Ace," it's worth mentioning that "Dragon's Lair" also had an animated series, which vastly watered down the tone and look of the characters in the original game. Those of us who were entering adolescence at the time never quite forgave the TV show for covering Princess Daphne up, even though a vast improvement was made in giving her more personality and more intelligence, rather than the original game's helium-voiced ditzy blonde.

On average, the game-spawned cartoons had little to do with their quarter-sucking counterparts. As embarrassing as it was to watch at times, Pac-Man actually came the closest to retaining the elements of the original game.

Of course, these days, we've had the aforementioned computer-generated Donkey Kong/Diddy Kong cartoon, and numerous shows are hitting the air which blur the lines: which was created first - the cartoon, the game, or the toys? Check your local TV listings for Monster Ranchers or Pokémon for further details.

Super Mario Bros. later made it to full-fledged movie status, as did Mortal Kombat (which then morphed into a short-lived live action TV series). The question remains: were other classics overlooked in the annals of animation? The answer, in my mind,





Q*Bert

is YES. Some games were plotted so well - even if the plots were tenuous links between sequels - that they begged for some Hollywood-style fleshing-out of their stories. The mind boggles at the thought of a properly-executed, anime'-style show following the Defender-Stargate-Robotron-Blaster cycle of games. Sinistar could have easily made the leap to TV or movies. One of the creators of Joust claims that he's had, from day one, visions of a Joust movie - but I have a hard time with that concept. (Maybe it's because I occasionally have to feed a gaggle of real live ostriches, but I just can't fathom anyone actually riding the things.)

I'm sure that everyone has their favorites about which they've imagined whole epic storylines - but that, friends, was the charm of the early games. What they may have lacked in graphical finesse, they made up for in spades by forcing the player to use his imagination - and in so doing, the player invented half of the adventure in his head.

Sometimes, when I remember these cartoons, I think that it may have been better that way to begin with!

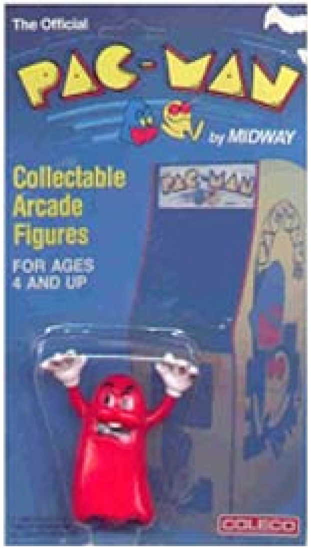
Space Ace

Frogger

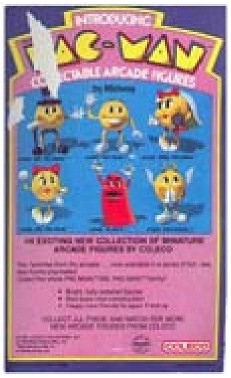
Cartoon screenshots courtesy: Toonarific.com

PVC · MEN

While video game fans may remember Coleco as the company that brought the incredible ColecoVision console to the world of home video gaming, we shouldn't overlook Coleco's prior record as a toy manufacturer. One of the early entrants into the dedicated-console races of the 1970s (Coleco's Telstar consoles played everything from Pong clones to tank games, but only one game per console), Coleco had earlier produced air hockey tables and a line of sports accessories. In 1982, having snatched a license to produce tabletop electronic games based on Pac-Man and Donkey Kong, Coleco also produced small solid PVC figures of characters from these games.



Pac-Man merited a total of six figures: Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, and Blinky were joined by Mr. Pac-Man (sporting a bow tie, cane, and top hat), Mrs. Pac-Man (complete with veil and bouquet), and "Pac-Angel" (for lack of a better description, Pac-Man with wings and a halo). The half-dozen characters from Pac-Man were complemented by Mario, Donkey Kong, and Donkey Kong Jr. from the Donkey Kong games.



Other companies jumped on the video game/toy bandwagon in later years, to the point where both are conceived simultaneously (Pokémon, anyone?). Acclaim picked up the banner with a line of PVC Super Mario Bros. characters, and other manufacturers have based toys on game characters ranging from Mortal Kombat to the Final Fantasy series to – believe it or not – a brand new series of Donkey Kong action figures. But even before the Q*Bert toys manufactured by Kenner, Coleco had Pac-Man and Donkey Kong on the shelves.

DONKEY KONG
DONKEY KONG
High-Swingin Donkey Kong
Surfin Funky Kong

Space Invaders
The Instant Videogame

by
Earl
"The Real Thing"
Green

It's one of the legends of the Atari era – the famous "Coke Wins!" cartridge for the 2600, originally designed as a premium, mail-in-your-proofs-of-purchase type item from the Coca-Cola Company. But for those who have actually seen the game, it's very easy to see that it's just a rip-off of Atari's own *Space Invaders* cartridge, hacked to turn the rows of advancing invaders into the letters PEPSI.

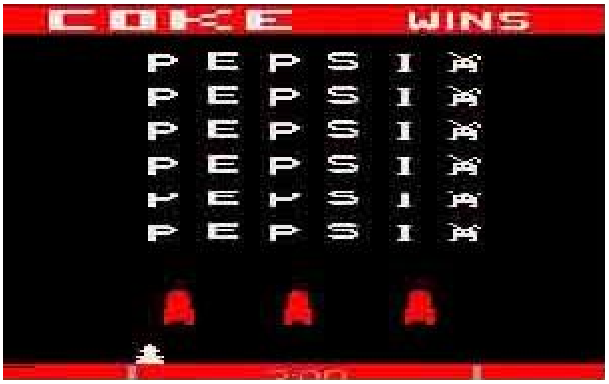
There's a reason why this cartridge never officially made it out the door; it wouldn't have made money for anyone but Pepsi's attorneys. To this very day, Pepsi's early-80s legal team can be heard howling, "Why? Why didn't they release *Coke Wins*? My Maserati could've been paid for by now!"

Flash forward to 1998. I'm browsing the web and discover a Star Trek web site with a Java version of *Space Invaders,* which replaces the usual barrage of alien critters with Romulan ships, Borg cubes, and so forth. Other than that, it's *exactly* the same game.

Somewhere between Coca-Cola and a Star Trek fan with too much time on his hands lies the truth: *Space Invaders* is a universal game, almost a kind of quasi-meta-game. All you need is a protagonist, some antagonists, and *voila* – you've got a whole new game. No fancy cut-scenes which explain your motivation – just blast those little varmints outta the sky! I thought about ways that this formula could be applied to *Space Invaders* based on the plots of hit movies from the past several years…and quickly realized that Hollywood's been missing the boat by turning every box-office blockbuster into a 3-D, *Doom*-style shooter. There is an easier way.

- **Twister: The Game** – you drive a red truck back and forth along the bottom of the screen. Several rows of little tornadoes bear down on you, dropping hailstones from on high. You try to shoot them with reinforced oil drums full of Christmas ornaments – erm, ahem, scientific instruments – all in the name of science, of course, unlike those other guys who are doing it for the *money*.

- **Con Air: The Game** – you're John Cusack, zipping along the bottom of the screen in Colm Meaney's (stolen) car. An airplane (formerly *Space Invaders'* mothership) is dropping large numbers of dead bodies out of the sky. You must shoot each one down to prevent an old couple in Arizona from having a heart attack.



- **Wag The Dog: The Game** – you're White House press secretary Joe Lockhart, attempting to shoot down row after row of reporters asking you to compare this whole Lewinsky mess with the movie *Wag The Dog.* Bonus points for shooting a floating blue dress (once again, formerly the mothership) out of the sky. (Based on a true story.)

- **Wild Wild West: The Game** – you're mega-star Will Smith, trying to shoot down row after row of heads of producer Barry Sonnenfeld for giving you a big smelly dog of a movie instead of just going ahead and making *Men In Black II.* (Also based on a true story.)

- **Independence Day: The Game** – hey, wait a minute…this wouldn't need to be different from *Space Invaders* at all!

- **Waterworld: The Game** – completely unrelated to Atari's *Swordquest: Waterworld,* but roughly equivalent in entertainment value. You're Kevin Costner, trying to shoot down the brains of multitudes of moviegoers so they'll be just unconscious enough to enjoy your next colossally-budgeted film flop. In place of the mothership is a Hollywood studio contract which, if shot ten times, will give you the green light to go ahead and make an even bigger bomb about post-apocalyptic postal workers.

I'm sure you get the idea. But if not, ask me for my idea about a really great game based on that family-friendly slice of celluloid called **Eyes Wide Shut**.

In retrospect, with a little bit of reflection on how many first-person or off-to-one-side-and-slightly-above-first-person shooters we've gotten out of various and sundry Hollywood franchises, would it actually be any *worse* if we got sixteen gazillion clones of *Space Invaders*?

The Coke Wins Project

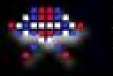
Think you can be a bit more creative than having the words "PEPSI" invade your planet? Alan Watkins has created a tool that allows you to create your very own word invaders.

"The Coke Wins Project" was previously only available for UNIX machines, but lately Alan was inspired to create a version for Windows as well. He's also willing to create a Mac utility provided someone out there can assist him with the technical details.

Once you've created your own masterpiece, send a screenshot of it to cav@classicgamer.com and we'll print the best ones. The most creative will win a free issue of Classic Gamer Magazine.

http://www4.ncsu.edu/~awwatkin

IN DEFENSE OF JOYSTICK NATION



by Earl Green

I remember picking up Joystick Nation at the oddly-named Little Professor book store in Green Bay late in 1997. I was so enthused at the thought that someone had written a book about video games then and now that I snatched it up and gladly paid the steep cover price on the spot.

Now, not quite three years later, I've come to realize that I'm probably one of five people who actually really, really dig this book. Listening to fellow game fans and collectors discuss Joystick Nation, I think it's down to me, J.C. Herz, her editor, and her parents. And sometimes I wonder about this. Has a small handful of negative reviews prevented many people from enjoying what is actually a good book? (Or am I living in my own bubble, isolated from all that is hip? After all, I thought Jar Jar Binks was pretty cool, so what do I know?)

Where I think many classic gaming aficionados go wrong is in expecting a comprehensive history of the video game industry. They're looking for release dates, tons of photos, behind-the-scenes dirt, and other such information. This is *not* Joystick Nation. What J.C. Herz's book *is*, is a broad sociological overview of how videogames have changed the face of entertainment, and how we, the players, have responded in turn. It looks at such issues as videogame violence, how games are marketed, and how the internet has come to challenge cartridges and CD-ROMs as the *de facto* vehicle for game software. There is also a comparison of how game development has changed – from the early days, when a Eugene Jarvis could single-handedly create a classic like *Defender,* to the present, where a whole company is required to crank out a single game.

But is this stuff of any interest to the players of those games? As far as I'm concerned, it most certainly is.

Joystick Nation provides an interesting study of how people have come to regard games, and how the game designers and manufacturers have responded. It points out some fascinating, and often curiously conflicting, trends: arcades were once dimly-lit places where people from all walks of life could gather (so long as they had a roll of quarters), and have now mutated into pastel-colored Chuck E. Cheese-esque "family entertainment centers," which appeal largely to middle-class white baby boomers. In the meantime, the games themselves have gone from mildly harmless abstractions to exercises in constant tension and, in some cases, graphic violence.

And despite what game advocates may say, it's hard to ignore the issue of violence in videogames in the post-Columbine world in which we live. It's not an issue that is likely to go away any time soon – if anything, Herz's brief discussions of game violence and ratings systems is pretty tame compared to debates on the same topics just a few years later. I actually think that a second edition of Joystick Nation is merited. What has transpired since then? Copyright battles over emulation, the classic gaming "scene" has been filled with more outspoken, opinionated, and ardent fans, and of course the video game violence debates that have erupted since the past few years' series of school shootings.

So, does Joystick Nation merit a second look? You betcha! The psychology of the game designers and the game players can't be overlooked. The culture that gave rise to video games – and the culture which those same games have spawned – bears examination. The marketing of games, both in the days of the Atari 2600 boom and in the Nintendo age, is a fascinating exercise in corporate (and consumer) psychology.

Why do gamers seem to be so intent on bashing Joystick Nation? Maybe it's because they don't know the meaning of the phrase *fin de siecle.* This is not a book that makes fun of gamers – if anything, a cynical eye is more likely to be turned toward the corporate entities that milk game fans for all they're worth. The author herself is a classic game fan and makes several shrewd observations about the kind of people we are. But she also makes equally astute observations about the psychology and sociology behind the video game phenomenon. Did these concepts go so far over the heads of the audience as to create a hostile reaction?

Perhaps Joystick Nation will fare better in its upcoming televised form on PBS. While the book's text is more about people than games, the use of video and audio from those games may balance things out better for the gaming audience, and make them feel like they're on safer ground.

Joystick Nation never claimed to be a concise history of the video game industry. For that, you'd be best advised to check out Don Thomas' I.C. When web site or Leonard Herman's book, Phoenix. Joystick Nation, on the other hand, is about "how video games stole *our* quarters and rewired *our* minds." The book isn't just about the games – it's also about *us.* And perhaps, when one considers that much of the Atari generation grew up to become what some people might less-than-kindly refer to as computer geeks, this is why some readers have a problem: it's a reflection, and not an entirely inaccurate one, of *us.*

What's the number one selling game system in the world?

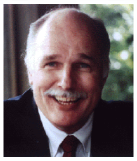
I'll give you one guess...

GAME BOY COLOR
Nintendo
SELECT START

GBStation.com

news - reviews - cheats - forums - chat

Interview with Fred Thorlin:



The Big Boss at Atari Program Exchange

by Kevin Savetz

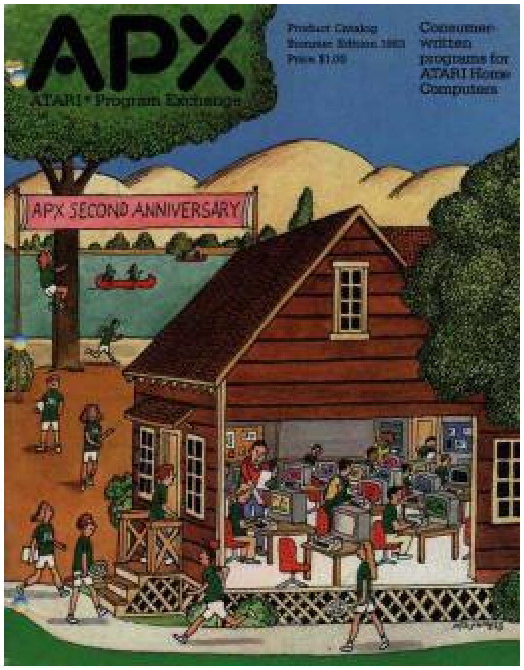
Fred Thorlin was Director of APX -- the Atari Program Exchange -- from 1982 through 1984. APX was -- and remains -- a rare software distribution model in which Atari would encourage end users to create software for their 8-bit computers, then sell the software through a catalog and pay royalties to the programmers.

APX programs were of high-quality, useful, and imaginative. The APX catalog included many memorable games, including GetAway!, Galahad and the Holy Grail, and Eastern Front: 1941. (Some titles, like Eastern Front, were so good that they were released as official Atari titles.) APX wasn't just about games, though. The catalog featured a wide variety of applications, utilities, programmers' tools, and software for kids. Some were definitely niche market programs -- like Fingerspelling (which taught simple sign language), Personal Fitness Program (exercise along with your Atari), and Circuit Lab (build and test DC electrical circuits).

APX inspired average users to get their applications out to their fellow Atari users. You didn't have to be a professional programmer, and your program didn't need to be mainstream enough to sell a million copies. Anyone who could write a useful program that met APX's quality standards could be a published (and paid) programmer.

Of course, back in those days, the line between computer user and programmer was a lot thinner. Most Atari users cut their teeth on BASIC the way people learn HTML today. But APX helped build the sense of community that made owning an Atari so special. And APX's quarterly prizes for the best programs -- usually $1000 to $3000, and once $25,000 -- which were awarded in addition to royalties, certainly didn't hurt the spirit of community software development that APX hoped to foster.

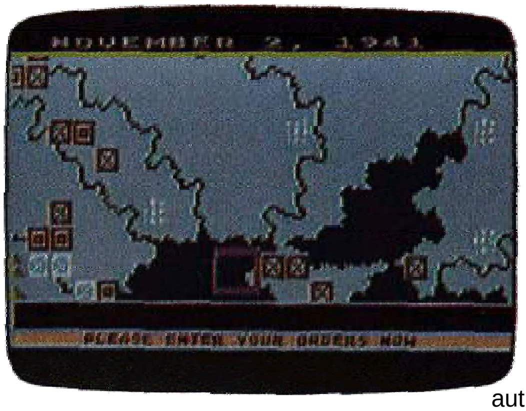
This interview with Fred Thorlin was conducted in April 2000.



Classic Gamer Magazine: Was running APX an office job within Atari? Was it full-time or something you did on the side?

Fred Thorlin: It was a full time job. When I joined Atari my first task was to set up a contract with Bill Gates to do a Microsoft BASIC for the Atari. I had dealt with him previously when I was at Texas Instruments. Software product acquisition and development was always my task.

At APX, my focus shifted from mainline products developed under contract, to user developed programs developed out of zeal. People would do fantastic things just out of artistic drive, e.g. *Dandy*, the *Koons* and *Prag* titles, and *Caverns of Mars*. It grew from just Dale Yocam pursuing development tools to a staff of 50-plus providing over 100 titles to retailers and end users. If you only worked full-time you didn't fit in at APX. It was exciting.



NOVEMBER 2, 1941

PLEASE ENTER YOUR ORDERS NOW

Eastern Front

CGM: What was your favorite APX program?

FT: I had a lot of favorites; so many of them. I have not seen anything as good on the PC or Mac. The spectrum of titles was so wide it is hard to say there was one favorite. Did I favor *Algi-Calc* over *Getaway*? They had nothing in common and were each great. It is also a bit like picking my favorite child.

Dog Daze was probably the most fun, although I probably spent more time playing *Getaway* and *Caverns of Mars/ Phobos* and more time staring at *HexaBug*. I was awed by all of the *Koons* and *Prag* titles. There was a bowling game that I was hooked on for a while. It involved organizing numbers and operators to come up with a particular value.

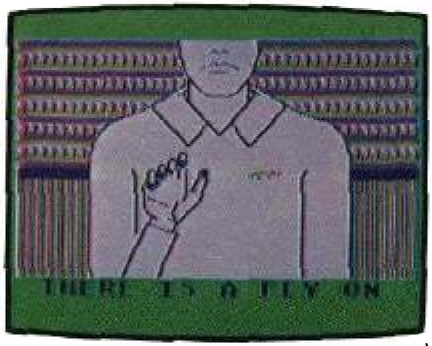
I hold a special affection for E*astern Front* and *De Re Atari*, both by Chris Crawford. They paid the bills (i.e. were our biggest sellers).

There are several APX titles that disappointingly never migrated to the PC. The quality of some of APX's titles were, and remain, superior and remarkable. For example, I would like to see a PC version of *Dog Daze* and *Getaway!* someday.

CGM: Do you have any stories about particularly weird or bad program submissions?

FT: If they were bad I would rarely get to see them. There were up to six people working in APX who I thought had the best jobs in the world. Their task was to open the submissions and decide who to publish, who to trash, and who to encourage. Every day was Christmas. Rarely would a dog slip past them. And those that did were quickly put out of their misery when we invited outsiders in to judge our quarterly contests.

Dandy was interesting. The author, Jack



Fingerspelling

Palevich, worked on it while he was at MIT. The program quickly passed review as it was well done and fun to play. By the way, it later appeared as an Atari arcade game, but I forget its name. I got to playing it one evening and thought there was something strange about the shape of the walls on one level. It turned out they spelled a popular undergraduate acronym that might not be appropriate in a family setting. I pointed this out to Jack and he changed the walls.

Galahad and the Holy Grail, written by Doug Crockford, contained some rather risqué scenes when it was initially submitted. Palevich and Crockford both eventually worked for Atari.

Caverns of Mars came in as an APX submission. A smart mocking-bird could see this was an industrial strength game. It was received by APX in the morning mail. I saw it at 10:30. We showed it to the president of the company just after lunch. It was not a tough decision for him. Legal got in touch with Greg Christensen in short order. The young man, I think he was a community college freshman, suddenly had a bunch of money inflicted upon him. I was never certain whether he benefited from that in the long run or not.

CGM: How many submissions would you estimate APX received each week? What percentage made it into the catalog?

FT: At first almost every submission was accepted. As the number of submissions grew, the acceptance rate dropped to well under 10%, as I recall. Dogs, old and new, got culled on the basis of sales and better products coming along.

CGM: How much hand-holding did APX give the contributors? If a program was marginal but had potential, would staffers help the programmer through the process of bug-fixes, adding features, and so on?

FT: We never touched code. It was always a temptation, but forbidden. And a good rule for many reasons.

CGM: Did you program the 8-bit yourself?

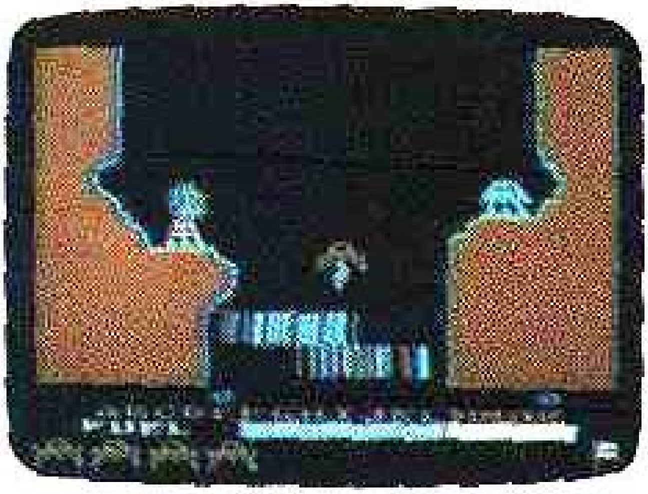
FT: I did BASIC and assembler mostly. Some Forth just to become familiar with the language. I had one truly techie title in the catalogue [*Microsoft BASIC Cross-Reference Utility*]. It had something to do with optimizing BASIC programs -- I actually collected some royalties on it. Enough to buy a pizza.

CGM: What do you do for a living these days?

FT: I now work as a software consultant in Houston, Texas and run the local Visual Basic professional programmers organization.

CGM: Do you still use an Atari?

FT: I abandoned mine when the disk drive failed. I still miss some of those programs.



CGM: How long did you work at Atari?

FT: Three years. When I left I tried to buy APX.

CGM: What were the circumstances of your trying to buy APX? Why did Atari close it down?

FT: They had a $2+ billion dollar problem. Even though I raised an appropriate amount of money to buy it, I couldn't get their attention. Later on the Tramiels offered it to me in gross disarray at a huge price.

CGM: You said that you negotiated with Bill Gates. Did you deal with him directly?

FT: Yes. We are still on a first-name basis as I occasionally deal with him on other business.

CGM: So, you must have a Bill Gates story. Everyone who has met him does.

FT: At one point I got him to commit to speak at a user group in Houston I organized meetings for. It was the Tuesday after the OS/2 announcement. He almost felt he was wasting his time. I brought him into the building through the back. After an amazing interview with a non-tech reporter, I took him for a peek at the audience. I had 2600 people there! He suddenly took it seriously, worked up an outline of his remarks, and gave a great presentation while standing on one foot.

Another time in Albuquerque I showed him a simple game that you could play in well under a minute. I beat him about 35 out of 37 efforts. I came back a month later, and he won or tied every game. He had studied the game until he solved it. That is a competitor.

CGM: Is there anything else about your days at Atari or APX that the world needs to know? Any more stories?

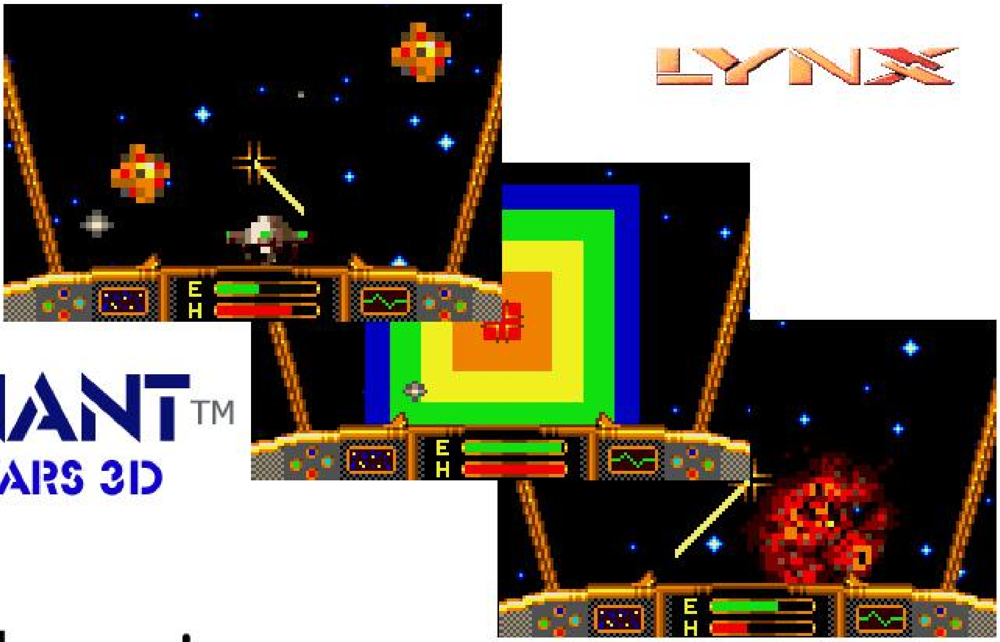
FT: APX had monthly meetings which included catered lunches when times were booming. There were rebellions, from which I still have memorabilia. My story in the book "Hackers" [by Steven Levy] was not atypical.

Sorting out the good guys from the bad was very hard to do as the rules of the business were just being formulated. One summer Steve Ross' son (Steve Ross was president of Warner Communications, which owned Atari) worked at APX. That made for an interesting afternoon when he visited one day.

There is no end to the stories. I have seen several books on the Atari experience. Only the more bizarre stories are true. It was a surreal experience.

More information about APX will be available at www.atariarchives.org/APX/.

Fred Thorlin can be contacted at thorlin@swbell.net.



LYNX

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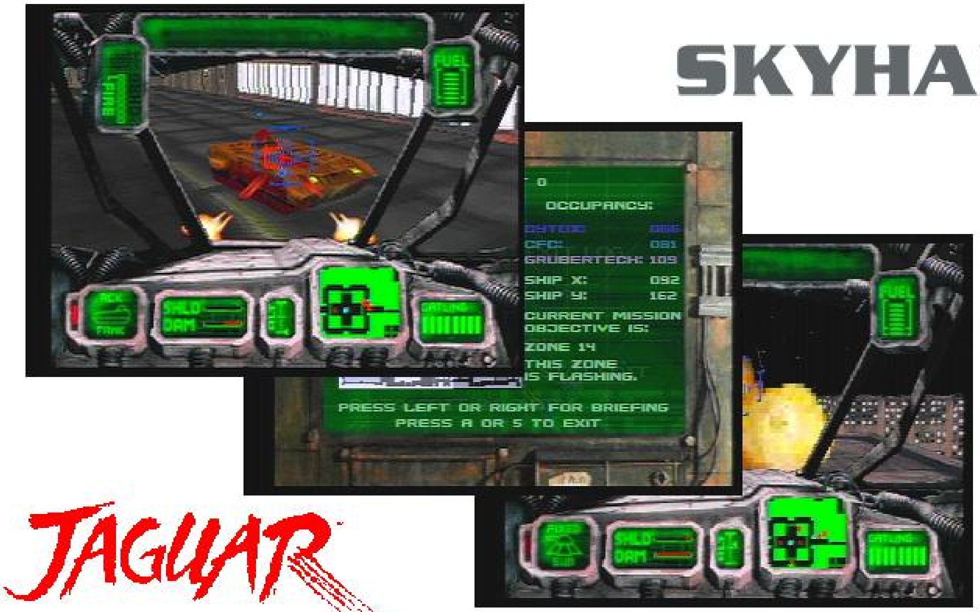

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GRUBERTECH: 109
SHIP X: 092
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PRESS A OR 5 TO EXIT

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JAGUAR

Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada
Celebrating the future by remembering the past
Place Bet
Plaza

CGE 2K: Classic Gaming Love-In, Vegas Style

Once again we journeyed to the 115 degree heat of the desert and endured bad food, watered down drinks, and broken escalators, all for the love of classic videogames.

Classic Gaming Expo 2k was held the weekend of July 29-30 at the Plaza Hotel in downtown Las Vegas, Nevada. This annual lovefest celebrates the rich history of classic videogames and allows the opportunity for the every day gamer to get great deals on games, meet fellow hobbyists, and mingle with the games' designers on the show floor.

But if you came to play games, odds are you didn't walk away disappointed. Arcade games such as Dragon's Lair, Space Ace, Tempest, Gyruss and many others littered the show floor (all set on free play, of course!). And, in case you felt you had the Right Stuff, Walter Day of Twin Galaxies and Ron Corcoran of Snipercade were on hand to record your high scores in the many tournaments that were offered.

Classic Gaming Expo 2000
Las Vegas, NV
July 29 & 30

Exhibitor

Chris
Cavanaugh

VENDORS

Vendor booths, while certainly not plentiful, offered a good assortment of products.

Carl Forhan of Songbird Productions held onto a steady flow of customers as he showed off the latest and greatest for the Lynx and Jaguar. Crystal Mines II: Buried Treasure and Remnant: Planar Wars 3D were the newest offerings for the Lynx and were made available as CGE2K exclusives.

The Cyberpunks released a new video, Stella at 20 Volume I, which tells of the early days working at Atari. Volume I is an excellent video and is much easier to watch than Volume II since it tends to focus on anecdotes, rather than the technical details of the games.

Intellivision Productions returned to celebrate the Intellivision's 20th birthday complete with birthday cake and party favors. They also hosted a round of "Intellivision Karaoke" where teams of players would dub in their own voice sound effects to Intellivision games being shown on a monitor. Yes, it was quite a sight to behold and was enormously funny. The people at Intellivision Productions definitely scored creativity points on that one. We were also fortunate enough to get our hands on three new games being released for classic systems. The first two, Sword Fight and Sea Battle, are playable on the Atari 2600, and Steamroller is playable on the ColecoVision. We will feature more in-depth reviews of these games in future issues.

Cosmi Software was showing off their latest creation, Super Huey III, a remake of their 1985 release, Super Huey. This Huey helicopter simulator features attractive 3D graphics, intuitive controls, and over 35 missions. Its expected ship date is September 1, 2000 and will sell for the low price of $14.95. Also, if you were fortunate enough to visit Cosmi's booth, they were handing out free copies of the original Super Huey, playable on an included C-64 emulator.

Rick Riley of Retroactive Games had a hands on demo of his game, Trancension: Forces of Virtue. Programmed entirely in Qbasic, Trancension features a complex plot, huge levels, and will particularly appeal to fans of the Ultima series. While only 70% complete at this stage, a demo can be downloaded for free at his website (www.retroactive-games.com). When completed, Rick promises the game will be very inexpensive to purchase. Rick also hinted at a possible deal to bring his game to the Game Boy.

Other notable booths included Joe Santulli's Digital Press, which was shared by the Cyberroach gang and Lee Krueger of ResQSoft fame. Marvin Lambright Sales was the booth to be at for great loose and boxed cartridge deals. Blast From the Past Amusements featured many cool products including Pac-Man and Galaxian clocks and Atari license plate frames; they also introduced their arcade game sales and restoration services. Howard Scott Warshaw was also on hand, albeit for only half a day, to sell his Atari history video, Once Upon Atari. Hasbro/Interactive stayed busy handing out free Atari CD-ROMs and showed off their latest and greatest games including the latest Pac-Man, Frogger 2, Breakout: The Great Escape and the much improved (from the E3 demo) Galaga.

The one odd standout at the show was the Imagine Media booth. While they achieved a CGExpo first: booth babes with jump ropes, I had difficulty making the connection to classic games. But as someone later explained on the Internet, "What's not to get? Hot chicks jumping rope!" Touché. Good point.

THE VIDEOGAME LOUVRE

The Expo, once again, hosted a Classic Videogame Museum to showcase many gaming rarities which can't be seen anywhere else. Some of the more unique items

Classic Gamer Magazine

Next Generation's Tom Russo shows off his favorite magazine while posing with Chris Cavanaugh

CGE
CLASSIC GAMING EXPO 2000
Las Vegas, Nevada
July 29-30, 2000

CGExpo Show Program

CGM columnist Lee Seitz and Managing Editor Sarah Thomas Man the Booth

included: A Hotel Atari 5200, Revenge of the Jedi game boxes, an Entex Adventurevision and an Atari 2600 test console. Hats off to Expo volunteer Scott Stilphen for doing a nice job in helping organize the museum.

THE GRADUATING CLASS

Classic gaming alumni were also present at the show, and most were very approachable and more than willing to sign an autograph or have a chat. Such famed designers included Robert "Dragonfire" Smith, Warren "Q*Bert" Davis, Bob "2600 Defender" Polaro, Joe "Combat" DeCuir, and the father of videogames himself, Ralph Baer. Many of the distinguished also gave keynote speeches detailing their experiences in the early days of the videogame industry. Joe Decuir exposed the many grueling details that went into the design of the Atari VCS, while Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley told of their humble beginnings with Electronic Games Magazine.

A short, but unique, presentation was made by Van Burnham, author of the upcoming book, Supercade. As a way of promoting her book, which is due out next year, she unveiled a brand new game for the Atari 2600 entitled Escape From Supercade. While the game will not be for sale, Expo attendees were able to enter to win one of 100 copies. However, it has been rumored that the ROM will be made available to download for play on Atari emulators. The object of the game is to collect the game cartridges before they are crushed by the roaming steamrollers.

STANDING O

Overall the Classic Gaming Expo was a big success. More than once I overheard people express how much fun they were having. We would have to agree. The credit goes to the Expo's organizers for putting on a successful show. John Hardie, Sean Kelly, Joe Santulli, and Tom Keller did a magnificent job in creating a fun and friendly atmosphere. Also, kudos to the many volunteers who worked behind the scenes making everything just right.

Rumors floated at the possibility of the Expo not being held again until 2002. Joe Santulli squelched those rumors by announcing that the show, will indeed be held in August of 2001. So mark those calendars and save that dough!

You can definitely count on us being there again, but I promise that I will turn around and go home if that escalator isn't fixed!

DIGITAL PRESS
THE Bio-degradable Source for Video Gamers
DIGITAL PRESS

Show Promoter and Digital Press Editor, Joe Santulli

CYBERROACH
DIGITAL PRESS
THE Bio-degradable Source for Video Gamers
JAGUAR

Al Backiel (right) Discusses the Finer Points of Classic Games

CELEBRATING
THE FUTURE
BY REMEMBERING
THE PAST

CGE Promoter, John Hardie

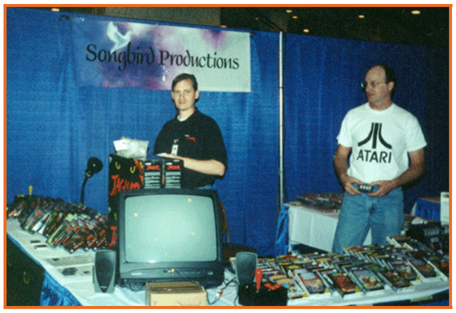
No Drinks at the Consoles, Please!!!

It's a Mob Scene!

William Cassidy (left) & Kevin Bowen (right) from Classicgaming.com

Arnie Katz, Joyce Worley & Bill Kunkel

Saturday Morning Line and Charlie Brown is One of the First to Get in.

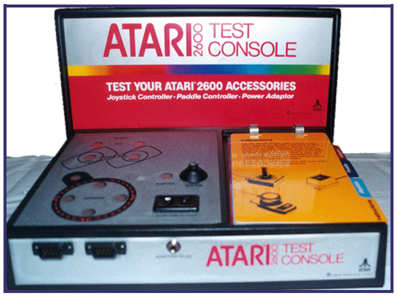


Carl Forhan (left) and Scott Walters Man the Songbird Booth

Keith Robinson of Intellivision Productions Shows Off the Latest Games

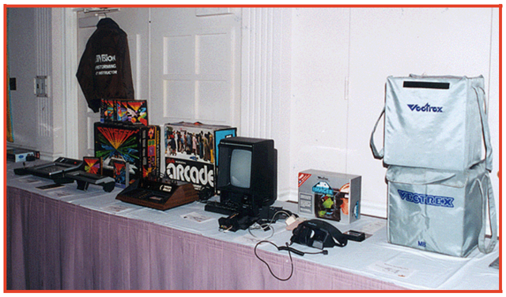
Walter Day (ref shirt) of Twin Galaxies

CGE 2K

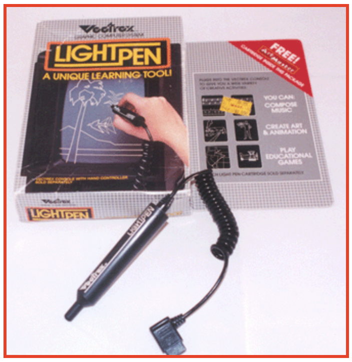


Atari 2600 Test Console

Guardian of the Museum's Treasures

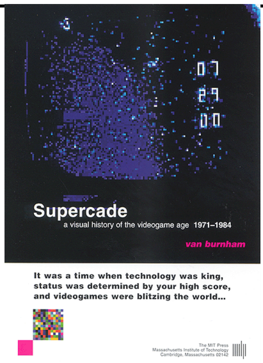


Museum Goodies



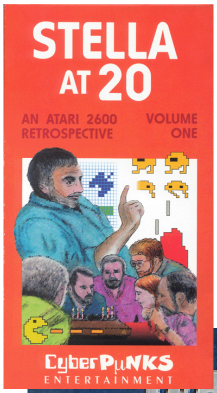
Free to All Attendees (kidding!)

INTELLIVISION™
INTELLIVISION Lives


Supercade
a visual history of the videogame age 1971–1984
van burnham

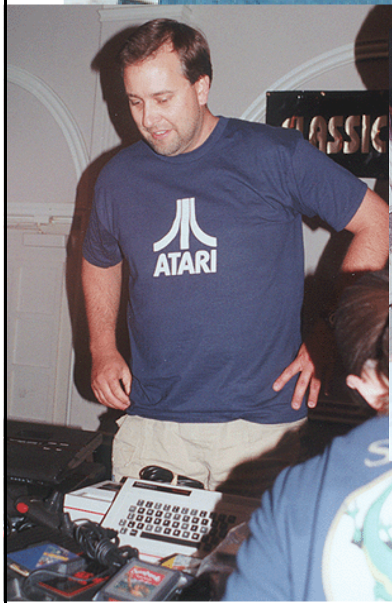
It was a time when technology was king, status was determined by your high score, and videogames were blitzing the world...

The MIT Press
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142


STELLA AT 20
AN ATARI 2600 RETROSPECTIVE
VOLUME ONE
CyberPuNKS ENTERTAINMENT

Classic Gamer Magazine
Because Newer Isn't Necessarily Better!

CLASSIC ARCADE VIDEO GAME SALES - SERVICE - RESTORATION
BLAST from the PAST Amusements
ARCADECLAS .COM
(805)
PAST!



From the Top!

An Intellivision button given away by Intellivision Productions; Tom Kahelin in the Intellivision booth; Van Burnham's Supercade flyer; Cyberpunks' Stella at 20 Volume I; Mark Androvich of PSExtreme Magazine attempts to buy a table dance from Sarah Thomas; Blast from the Past shows off one of their clocks; Van Burnham shows off Escape From Supercade; Lee Krueger makes some deals in the trading room; People entering the Escape From Supercade contest while some guy in the background thinks sinister thoughts.

CGE 2K CGE 2K

SONIC ADVENTURE

Review by Henry Hutcheson

TIME 05:01:39
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01

Wow! All I can say is WOW! Sonic Adventure, a game responsible for Sega's comeback, is truly amazing. The Blue Blur is back, bringing with him an array of new characters, faster moves, and awesome graphics.

This time around, Sonic's old nemesis, Robotnik, has attacked Station Square with his monster, Chaos, a liquid capable of morphing into various creatures (including Sonic himself!). Robotnik has also set out to achieve world domination by collecting the seven Chaos Emeralds so Chaos can evolve into higher stages of ferocity. In addition to Chaos, Robotnik has created 5 robots to rub out Sonic and his friends, although one of them, named E-102 "Gamma," seems to have a soft spot for Sonic.

In order to defeat Robotnik, players must utilize different characters to complete their mission. In addition to E-102, there is Big the Cat, Amy Rose, Knuckles, Tails, and of course, Sonic. You begin the game as Sonic and unlock other characters as you encounter them while completing various stages of the game. As the game progresses, the characters can earn bonus items, such as Sonic's spin-dash shoes, in addition to new moves such as the Light Speed Dash and Homing Attack.

As far as the graphics are concerned, they can best be described as "jaw dropping." Showcasing every bit of Dreamcast's 128-bit graphics power, Sonic's characters are beautifully rendered and the spacious environments (spanning more than 50 levels) display a wide spectrum of colors. Mystic Ruins and Station Square are real stand outs in this regard; I have never seen graphics this impressive. They are awesome... with almost zero problems.

Note that I said "almost." One of the few problems Sonic Adventure has is with clipping. At times, Sonic will get stuck in walls and pass through solid objects; other times, the floor will begin blinking or just disappear entirely. This causes you to fall to your death and have to start again, which can put you in a rather foul mood.

Another problem is the disorienting effect caused by the camera jumping around. One moment you're gliding around as Knuckles, when the camera suddenly pulls so far back, you're lost in the air and fall to your death. Or, you may be running at an extremely high speed and the camera will suddenly get stuck behind a wall. Now if that isn't frustrating, I don't know what is!

The game's sound is very impressive. These are not your average bleeps and bloops. In fact, to call them bleeps and bloops would be an insult! Take, for example, Sonic's spin-dash. As he begins to rev-up, the sound starts with a low hum and works up to a high roar, resembling a jet. Other great sounds can be heard when enemies are destroyed (almost sounding as if they were taken straight from an action movie).

The music in Sonic Adventure enhances the gameplay immensely and never becomes repetitive or overbearing. Each character is even given its own theme song! Faster paced levels, such as the Snowboarding one, feature up-tempo, rock-like music, while the music on the longer, drawn out levels, such as the Snowcap Zone, is more unhurried with a softer, more mystical melody. Most of the songs feature recognizable instruments, giving the music an "established" kind of feel.

Note that not all of Sonic Adventure's gameplay is perfect. Control can be one of the game's other frustrations. For instance, you can be running at an extremely high speed and easily lose control of the character, sending him into randomly wild directions. While this problem doesn't exist with the character of Big the Cat, his is replaced with an equally bad one: Big's running speed (or lack thereof!). After starting the first level, I thought it would take over an hour to finish the level! However, once you get past those problems, most of the gameplay is great.

Now on to Sonic Adventure's greatest aspect: replay value. Each character's part of the game takes at least a few hours to beat, with the least important character having the shortest playing time and Sonic having the most. As a bonus, once you beat the game using all characters, you are then given access to play the game using Super-Sonic, the invincible yellow Hedgehog.

To me, this is one of the best games ever and certainly belongs in any gamer's library! Suitable for gamers of all ages, Sonic Adventure is excellent for novice players, yet is certainly challenging enough for even the most jaded gamer. Since most of the problems I mentioned are easily overlooked, once you get past them, you'll realize how great this game is.

Now, bring on Sonic Adventure 2!

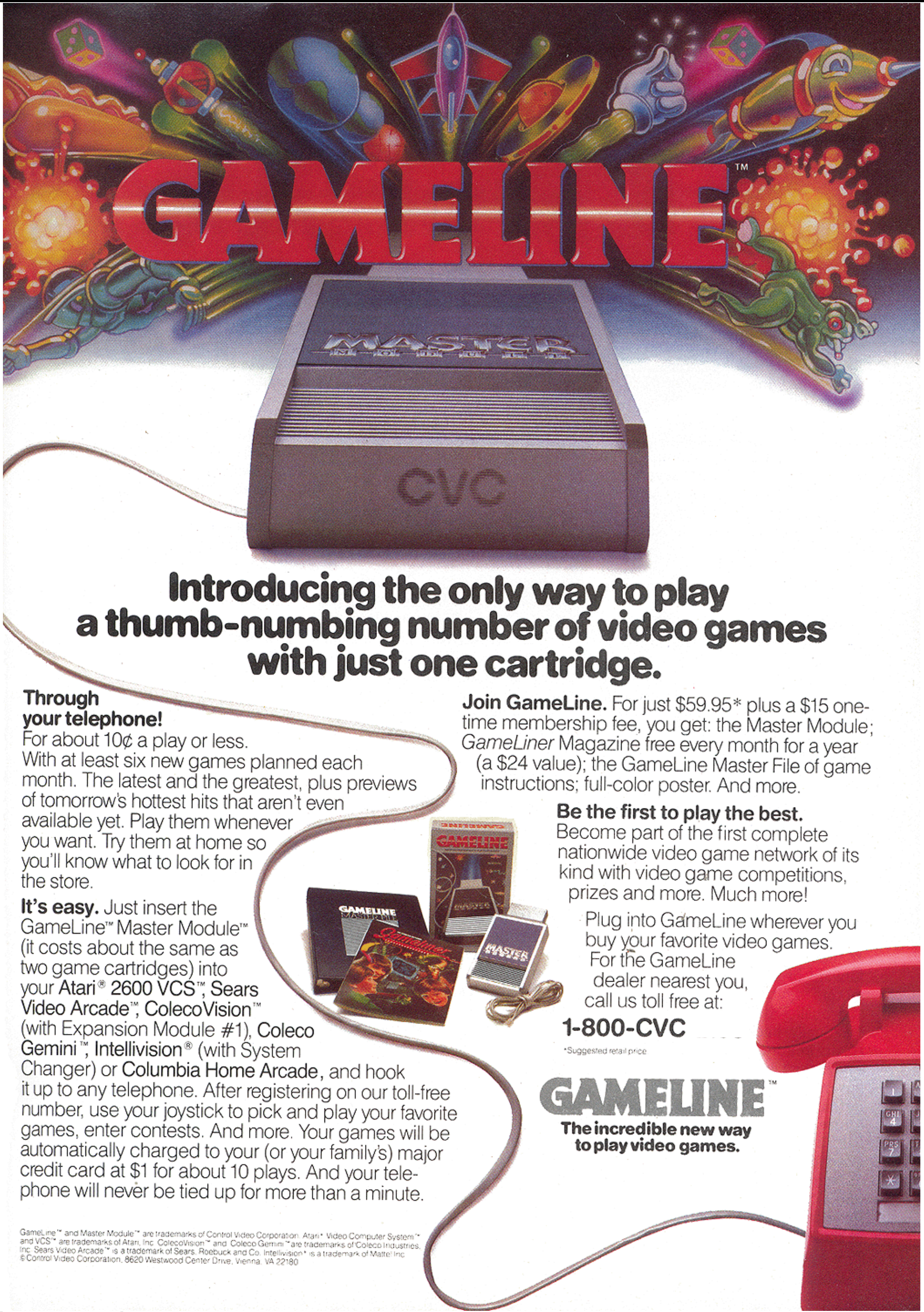
Graphics: A+
Sound: A
Replay Value: A
Gameplay: B+

Overall: A

Sega Dreamcast.
SONIC ADVENTURE
SEGA
RP

Sonic Adventure
Platform: Sega Dreamcast
Developer: Sonic Team
Publisher: Sega
Number of players: 1
Supports: VM Unit, Jump Pack
MSRP: $49.99

Classic Advertisement 1983



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Interview With
Jerry Greiner

by Lee K. Seitz

In November 1999, Jerry Greiner, better known as classic video game dealer Jerry G, announced he was going out of business after many years. In February 2000, shortly before the official announcement that he had sold his business, I caught up with Mr. Greiner to get the details of why he'd both gotten into and then gotten out of the classic video game sales business.

Classic Gamer Magazine
Because Newer Isn't Necessarily Better!
Classic Gamer Magazine
www.classicgamer.com

Greiner, 58, began collecting classic video games around 1989, although he'd "always been a collector of something." He and his wife enjoyed going to garage sales. Mr. Greiner said, "I kept seeing the Atari stuff, and I remembered back when my kids were younger having the Atari and playing the games. Kept thinking, 'well one of these days I ought to pick one of these up so I can show the grandkids what their parents played with.' We stopped at a garage sale and a guy had a box full of games and a game system. Probably had 50 games, a bunch of controllers, and stuff. Sold it to me for 15 bucks. Then, unfortunately at the next garage sale, a guy had a box full of games about the same size. He offered it to me for 5 bucks. I said, 'Geez, I've got to average my cost here,' so I bought that one."

Greiner continued, "Then I got to thinking, 'well, I wonder how many different games are out there.' So I just started buying them by the titles."

That part probably sounds very familiar to most collectors. He remembered setting a limit on what he would pay: 10 cents a game. However, if it had "some weird, neat label on it," he'd go up to 25 cents.

"It was easy to go out on a Saturday and, if I'd wanted to, I could have picked up a thousand games, but I'd usually find 20 or 30 or 50 or something I didn't have." Then he decided he should have a system for each grandchild, but not knowing how many he'd have, he just started picking up extras.

Like many other collectors, Greiner started collecting a single system: the Atari 2600. He recalled, "I remember stopping one day and the guy had these ugly looking yellow carts. The man claimed to have every cartridge ever made for this system. By the time I left, he got down to $5 if I took everything. I said, 'no, I don't want it,' "

> ***"I don't think anybody's going to get rich selling old video games."***

Greiner continued. "I figured it was some weird junk that wasn't worth anything. Then [later] I realized it was a Fairchild [Channel F] and then all of a sudden I wanted a Fairchild. I hunted the flea markets and thrift stores and garage sales until I finally found a Fairchild."

Although his collection has branched out to include other systems, the Atari 2600 remains his favorite. "It'll probably be the last thing I give up. They'll have to bury it with me," he said.

When asked what his wife and children thought of his new hobby back when he started, Greiner at first said he wasn't sure. He literally filled up their house in Oregon with his collection, he said. When they prepared to move to Arizona in 1996, she said, "I want a house we can live in. So let's find one with a three car garage so you can put the games in the garage and I can have the house." "However," Greiner said, "she's been very supportive and understanding of all the stuff that I drag in." Both of them enjoyed going to thrift stores and garage sales. It showed when they moved because they had a *six week* garage sale, made almost $12,000, but didn't even get rid of *half* of their stuff.

Around 1991, Greiner stumbled upon an early issue of *The 2600 Connection* newsletter and saw an ad for Games and More, who had Atari games still in the box. He called, and the owner started ranting about how he was tired of collectors calling up and then complaining about his prices on the old games. Nobody complained when he charged $30-40 for an NES game, but people got upset if he even asked for what he paid for the older systems' titles. Greiner asked how much the owner was selling old games for? The man replied $5-10, but he was going to just throw them out because they were taking up shelf space. Greiner told the man he was really interested and asked what titles he had. The owner responded he didn't have a count, but he had a list of the titles he had and read some off. Greiner asked, "If I took more than one, what would you want for them?"

"Five bucks a piece. If you took a bunch it would be even cheaper," the man replied.

Greiner asked, "How big a bunch and how much cheaper?"

The owner told him, "If you take everything I have, I'll sell it to you for 50 cents a piece, whether it's a piece of hardware or a game, and I won't charge you for the common stuff."

A week later, $1800 in shipping charges showed up on Greiner's doorstep. That was almost three times what he had paid for the merchandise itself, which was all Atari 2600 items. His wife asked, in the way wives do, what he intended to do with it all. Thinking on his feet, he replied, "I'm going into business!" His first sale was to a man in New Orleans: Kaboom! for $4.

Over time, more people with large supplies of games came to him to sell cheap. Sometimes he told them to junk it because he didn't know what to do with more of it. One man in New Mexico tried to sell him a bunch of Intellivision games. After going down to a nickel a game, Greiner still refused because he didn't have room for it. Finally, the man said he'd send it to him for the cost of shipping, but Greiner still said no. He regrets it now, somewhat, but at the time it seemed the correct thing to do.

Over the years, business has been up and down, but enjoyable. Most of Greiner's profits were spent on his personal collection or expanding his inventory. "It's not like everybody thinks," he said. "It's not a way to make a million dollars. I don't think anybody's going to get rich selling old video games. It's particularly tough if you're trying to do it as a dealer with taxes and those requirements." He believes collectors who sell a lot but aren't officially in business will eventually discover the pleasure of dealing with the IRS. "It costs me more to try to keep track of the paperwork than to pay the taxes," he quipped.

Greiner feels the hobby of collecting classic video games has grown since he went into business. "I think things like eBay have been very helpful to the hobby, but they're also very detrimental. I'm not sure, in the long run, if it's going to kill the hobby or increase the hobby. It's been good from the standpoint that it brings recognition among people that these things have value to somebody and it encourages more people to look for them," Greiner says.

He continues, "I think the detrimental part has been that no matter who you talk to in the last couple of years, it's extremely difficult to find anything at all; the reason being every collector buys everything he can with the idea of selling the excess on eBay. And so there's not the stuff out there for somebody like myself or the collectors who started when I did to go along and say, 'oh, look at this, I think I'll just buy one of these for the heck of it,' unless we're the first guy at the sale. The change that I've seen is that there are more customers who buy from me because they want to play a 2600 game than there are collectors who want a particular title or label or something."

When asked if the expansion of the Internet might play into this, he agreed. "When I first started, basically I did snail mail catalogs. Now I haven't printed a catalog in three years. Most of the same names are still doing business with me, except now they're using the Internet."

I asked Greiner if the decision to leave the video game business had been long in coming and if it was a difficult one. He said, "It was probably a matter of several years in coming. It was very difficult to make the final decision because I didn't really want to get out of games."

He decided to keep the hobby, but quit the business. He will continue to maintain the video game museum portion of his former web site at www.atari2600.com.

"I guess the biggest problem for me and the biggest reason that I decided I had to quit was I was just unable to keep up [with shipments]," he said. Another big factor was that both Greiner and his wife have health problems. Greiner is fighting diabetes and recurring exhaustion. However, he will continue to help the new owners, a young couple, with the business for an undetermined amount of time. (Basically as long as he feels like it.)

He'll keep a personal stock of rarer items for trade. "When I first started accumulating things, I was accumulating them for trade. I picked up a number of contacts from *The 2600 Connection* and the *Digital Press*. Everybody had the good stuff that I wanted but they wouldn't sell it; they wanted to trade for it. So I started trying to collect the better stuff to use for trading. And then people would get mad at me because I wouldn't sell it. Finally I broke down and sold some. This time I don't intend to break down and sell."

Greiner did, however, sell large chunks of his collection as part of getting out of the business. Much of it brought a higher price than he had anticipated. He said it was difficult to part with some of it, particularly the obscure titles he hadn't had time to play.

When asked what he would do with all the new space, he replied, "I'm not so sure there's going to be a whole lot of space left." His wife wants to actually put a car in one garage. Another is used for his office. The third he'll fill with shelves. There's also a storage building in back that he may store household items in or make a game room out of. He will free up a patio, which has some boxes on it that he never unpacked after receiving them. All of these areas were filled to the ceiling with boxes of games and consoles.

"I've met a lot of nice people and good friends through the hobby. I've had people stop by from all over the world," Greiner concluded. "It's been more fun than work, although it's been kind of stressful at times. I'm hoping I can get a little more rest, get my health built back up where I can do more things. I hope I can make the game show in Las Vegas this year. I missed the first two." I hope you can make it, too, Jerry. No doubt it'll be even more fun for you now that you're "retired."

Ed note: Jerry did, in fact, make it to the this year's Expo. Thanks, Jerry, for stopping by our booth and allowing us to snap your picture!

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for finding any
classic video games
site!

ATARI 2600
Raiders of the Lost Ark

RAIDERS OF THE LOST "J" Contest

Help Us Find the Lost Easter Egg!

After our Howard Scott Warshaw article was published last issue, we received a letter from an alert reader, Scott Stilphen. Scott wanted to know if we knew the whereabouts of a “strange object” hiding in ”Raiders of the Lost Ark” for the Atari 2600. He directed us to a screenshot of Raiders, which was printed in the November 1982 issue of Electronic Games Magazine (shown at right). Sure enough, the screenshot shows Indy in the Valley of Poison next to a blue block with the letter “J” inside.

“Hmmmm…..,” we thought.

Donning our best Fedoras, we embarked on a mission to determinine the origin of the “Lost J.” Our first stop was to the source, himself, Mr. Howard Scott Warshaw.

After threatening him with our whips, Mr. Warshaw told us: “If you'll notice the 'J' shape in this graphic, you will see that it is a signature by my graphic artist, Jerome Domurat. I wasn't the only one with Easter Eggs in my games! A most opportune screen shot indeed.“

Naturally we asked him, “So, how can we find it?”

He replied, “I think it is findable, but I honestly don't remember exactly how. It's been a long time.” Then he threw “E.T.” cartridges at our heads until we left.

Just when we felt we hit a dead end, Jerome Domurat himself contacted us. He told us, “It's been a number of years since that was done. I can't remember how it was invoked. I do think it was in the finished cartridge since there was typically only one version of the code.”

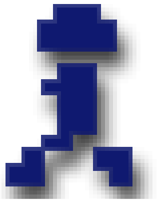
So, that’s it! We’re at our dead end. Now we’re looking to you to help us find the “Lost J.”

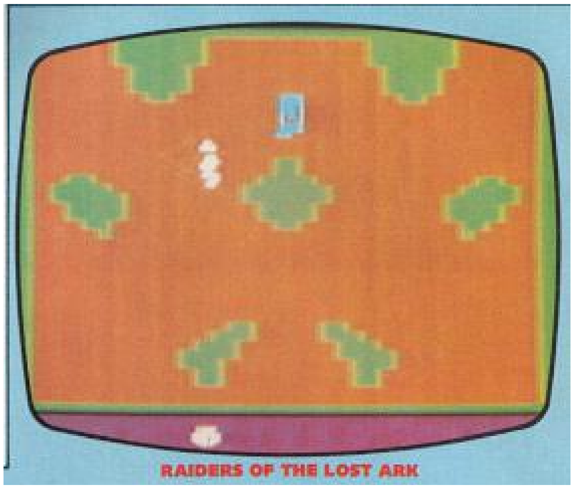
How to Enter:

The first person to e-mail their verifiable solution (that works!) to us will receive a bevy of prizes.
Send to: cav@classicgamer.com

Rules

1. Only e-mails with the solution will be accepted.
2. No contacting Howard Scott Warshaw or Jerome Domurat. We’ve already squeezed enough info from them.
3. No hair pulling.




RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

Prizes

- One Year Subscription to Classic Gamer Magazine
- Midway Classics 2 (PC Version)
- “Once Upon Atari” Video, Autographed by Howard Scott Warshaw
- Bragging Rights

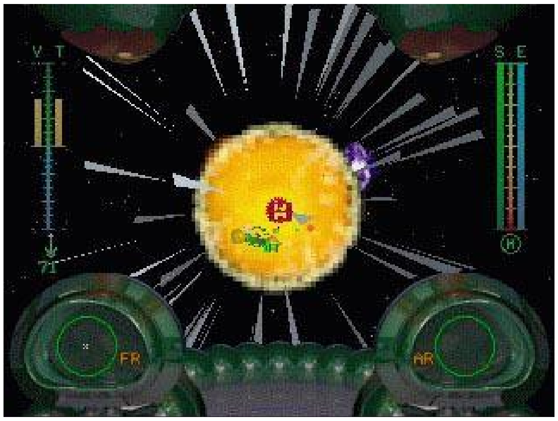
ATARI 2600
Raiders of the Lost Ark*
Use with Joystick Controller

JAGUAR LYNX

STRAIGHT FROM THE CAT'S MOUTH

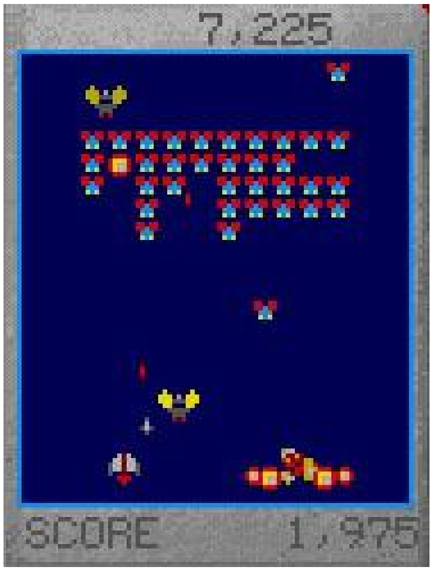
by Carl Forhan

Well, unless you've been living under a rock for the past year, you probably know that Songbird has released four (yep, four) new titles for the Atari Jaguar: Protector, Soccer Kid, Hyper Force, and Skyhammer. These games come complete with authentic full-color Jaguar packaging, and the games themselves have been a big hit with Jaguar fans worldwide.



Battlesphere

At long last, BattleSphere arrived for the Atari Jaguar this year, much to the pleasure of Jaguar fans everywhere. This game was one of the most anticipated titles ever for the Jaguar, and it is to 4Play's credit that they stuck through the death of Atari Corp. and made good on their commitment to see this game published.



Lynx Lexis Cheat

The Lynx front is equally exciting lately. Othello was released earlier this year by hobby developer Harry Dodgson, and Songbird acquired the rights and complete source to three unreleased games from Beyond Games (*BattleWheels*): Cybervirus, Ultra Vortex, and Mechtiles.

As if that isn't enough, two other games are in active development through Songbird: Championship Racing (overhead racing game) and Remnant (3D space combat). Songbird recently announced plans to publish Remnant at CGE2K in Las Vegas in late July.

Songbird is continually pursuing other Jaguar and Lynx projects, so be sure to stay tuned to **http://songbird.atari.net** for the latest scoop on what's up and coming from Songbird.

……

The Vault

Cheat modes for Lynx Ponx:

At the options screen, press 'Opt 1' and 'Opt 2' together to enable 'evil' mode.

During the game, press 'pause'. Press and hold 'Opt 2', then press 'up.' This will enable an extra ball (max of three).

Cool Lynx Lexis cheat: (it reveals a hidden Galaxian game!)

On the Table of Contents screen, enter the following code: L R L R D U Opt1 Opt2, then start the Pages game.

Cheats for Jaguar Hyper Force:

Skip a stage:	7127 4718
Weapon 1:	1768 6965
Weapon 2:	2564 8133
Weapon 3:	3233 2861

More cheats coming next issue!

"INSTANT REPLAY"

Carl Forhan recently caught up with former Lynx developer Tom Schenck, to see what he had to say about his days as a professional Lynx coder...

Classic Gamer Magazine: Could you give us some background on your work experience and education prior to developing Lynx games.

Tom Schenck: Well, I only barely completed high-school. In fact, I got into quite a bit of trouble in school for my coding/hacking practices. I started programming when I was in 6th grade, after fiddling with computers in the classroom. My dad signed me up for a Pascal programming course at the local college, so my first programming experience was using VI and ED to create Pascal programs, and compile them with CP on a UNIX machine.

As for work, my first job was actually setting up (installing), and later repairing, Apple computers. I never had a programming job before I started working on Lynx games. I did make games as a kind of hobby for the neighborhood kids. I had found an old Apple II with no disk drives, and I would turn it on, program a game, and leave it on for a day or two while the kids played it. I created several games and neat hacks this way.

It was my then-girlfriend-now-wife who convinced me to apply for a programming job I saw in the San Diego Union-Tribune classifieds ...

CGM: What company did you work with while developing Lynx games, and which titles did you specifically work on?

TS: A little tiny company called "Knight Technologies." When I joined, there were three employees; myself, John Smedley, and one other guy whose name I forget. There were a few games in development, and I was given 'Dirty Larry: Renegade Cop' as my first professional game. We later contracted to convert 'Qix' to the Lynx, then we got the 'Double Dragon' license.

We started a few other titles, including 'The Guardians:Storms over Doria,' a basketball game, and some other game which I don't remember. We also had 'Raiden' for a while, but the company went through some pretty turbulent times, and that got lost in the shuffle.

DIRTY LARRY
RENEGADE COP
LYNX
ATARI

CGM: What was it like working with Atari? Any good or bad anecdotes you'd like to share?

TS: Atari was pretty good to work with for the most part. I can't say, however, that every moment was good. Towards milestone dates, things got a little crazy, and some of the people I talked to at Atari were, shall we say, not the brightest bulbs in the pack.

When I was working on Dirty Larry, I remember a phone call I made to the guy who had created the world editor we were using. I had gotten the editor into a state where if I added any more sprites, it crashed. Well, while I was talking to him, we traced through several scenarios and talked about what settings I had, how much RAM, etc. Towards the end of the call, we were both pretty frustrated when suddenly he asked, "Hey, do you think I should close the graphics files after I open them? I wonder if the OS doesn't close them automatically after I read them..." The guy was opening something like 300 files without ever closing a single file. That's like opening 300 windows on your desktop and wondering why it's so hard to find anything. He changed the program to open a file, read the data, then close it. The program ran much better (and faster) after that.

I do remember getting yelled at quite a bit. Most of that happened while I was simultaneously developing Dirty Larry, Qix, and The Guardians games. I'm only one guy!

CGM: Which Lynx game is your favorite, and why?

TS: That's easy. Todd's Adventures in Slime World. It's just great fun. The multi-player aspect (we hooked up 4 people to play at a time when we could) was incredible, and the controls were fun. The enemies were great. It was a good example of why the people at Epyx didn't deserve what they got. They made great products and got screwed.

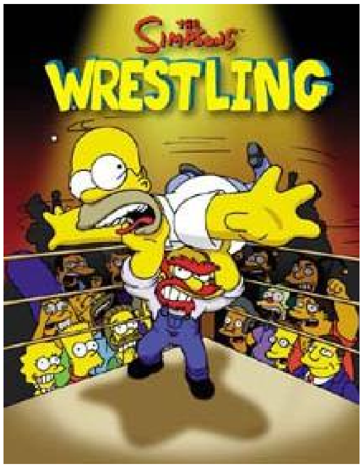
CGM: Which game was developed the quickest? Why?

TS: Qix was developed in 2 months. Complete. Why? C'mon! It's QIX! Actually, it helped that Knight Technologies had developed previous versions of Qix and might have had a little 6502 code lying around ...

CGM: What happened to The Guardians: Storms Over Doria? Is there any chance a playable demo or source code still exists somewhere? Was this game ever demoed at a trade show?

TS: Wow! That was a game that deserved to be finished. The game actually died because of the horrible Atari marketing machine. Knight Technologies was purchased by Park Place Productions and that was one of the games that didn't make the cut.

I actually started that game just as I was finishing Qix. The original design called for a four-player dungeon crawl with real-time connectivity. We spent a bit of time trying to figure out how to save the data for the characters so you could adventure together when you had time. That ended up being something of a flop, so we just turned it into a simple Phantasy Star/Zelda style game. It did get pretty far along. We had the main map running, and several dungeons being developed. It played quite a bit like Ultima VII at the time, actually. In the town, you had houses with roofs that disappeared when you walked in.



As for demos, that's an interesting story. We did have some playable stuff, but the publisher decided not to show it at the time. We did create a 4-frame slide show. It showed a few things but really just gave you the flavor. (EGM reviewed the game as 80% complete based on that. They talked about all the cool explosions they saw, the awesome enemy AI, etc. I've got that somewhere.)

I talked to Telegames recently about the game. They don't have anything from it at all. The chances are that it is all lost at this point. Most of the game exists on the PC of all things, and there's got to be an Amiga or two around with the source code and complete assets. Really, though, the game grew and evolved. It was a dream of the designer to create the game. He'd thought about it for many years before, and he actually did create his dream. It's now called EverQuest. Check the credits. John Smedley.

CGM: Are there any cheats to your Lynx games that perhaps have not surfaced yet?

TS: Actually, no. There was one cheat in Qix that displayed the Knight Technologies logo and our names, but when the publisher found it, we were ordered to remove it. If you entered KNIGHH as a password, it would happen. We got chewed out pretty bad for that, so we didn't try again.

CGM: What are you up to these days?

TS: These days? Well, I'm still making games. I'm on my (counting ...) 11th published title now. It's a PlayStation game called (tentatively) "Simpsons Wrestling." The company I'm with, Big Ape Productions, is full of pretty cool people. A lot of the guys here have been around for a while, and it's quite a switch from the old Knight Technologies days in some ways, but still kind of like it.

Of course, hangin' with the family is also a big deal. It's funny, 'cuz my family has kind of grown out of the video game career. I met my wife shortly before I started working in the industry, and I've never left it. Programming games is a dream job for most programmers (except those who have done it).

CGM: Any chance we will see a Lynx game from you again in the future?

TS: Actually, yes there is. I've learned quite a lot in the last 10 years, and I know that I could create a game quite a bit better than my previous attempts. Dirty Larry was an incredible learning experience. Nowadays people focus on the technology and the graphics and incredible processor speeds we have on most platforms (the Dreamcast runs a 200MHz)... quite a switch from the 7MHz speed of the Sega Genesis, or the 16/4 MHz speed of the Atari Lynx, or even the 1.023MHz speed of the old Apple][.

CGM: Thanks for taking the time to speak with us, Tom!

TS: No problem. Enjoy!

HOMEBREW REVIEW

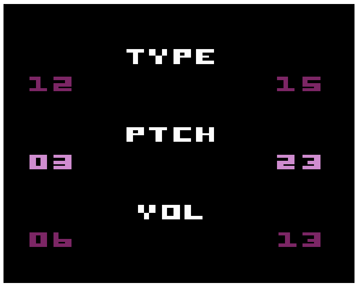
by Tim Snider

Back when our favorite consoles were young (and so were we), many of us dreamed of creating our own games for these beloved systems. Now, many years later, a few stalwart individuals are following through on those dreams. Homebrewed games are being released on a variety of classic systems: Colecovision, Vectrex, and the Atari 2600 to name a few.

For the first Homebrew Review, I thought it'd be a good idea to re-visit the homebrews that jumpstarted the Atari 2600 homebrew explosion of recent years. As an added bonus, I've included a review of a new homebrew that was released shortly before presstime.

SoundX by Ed Federmeyer
Platform: Atari 2600
Released in 1994

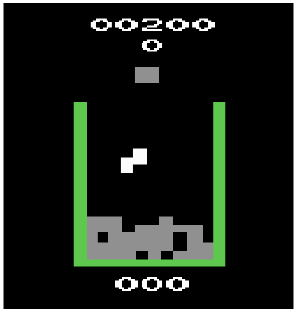
The first 2600 cart released in more than a decade, SoundX is a sound-generating cart that displays all of the Atari 2600 sound parameters on the screen, allowing the user to modify Atari voices. SoundX allows you to create any sound the 2600 is capable of and is useful for figuring out the type, pitch, and volume of sounds when programming your own Atari games.



SoundX, more of a utility than a game, proved that the Atari still had new life in it years after the last company-produced cart. SoundX also prompted others to create their own Atari games and many used SoundX as a springboard for the sound effects of their own homebrewed efforts. SoundX can safely be called the Father of the Modern Atari Homebrew.

Edtris 2600 by Ed Federmeyer
Platform: Atari 2600
Released in 1995

Edtris 2600, Ed Federmeyer's second Atari programming effort, is one of the best homebrews created for the Atari 2600 and is the first GAME released for the system in the modern era. Based on Alexei Pazhitnov's classic brick-stacking game Tetris, Edtris 2600 is a virtual translation of the original. As in the original, you must guide oddly shaped pieces into a "well," rotating and maneuvering the pieces to form solid lines across the playfield. Filled lines disappear. If the stack reaches the top of the well, the game ends. As the game goes on, the pieces drop faster, making maneuvering nearly impossible.



Graphics for Edtris 2600 are very simple, but how complicated must the screen be? This is a block-falling puzzle game, for Pete's sake! However, the gameplay is flawless. Moving the joystick shifts the falling piece from side-to-side and pulling down makes it plummet into place. Pushing the fire button rotates the piece 90 degrees.

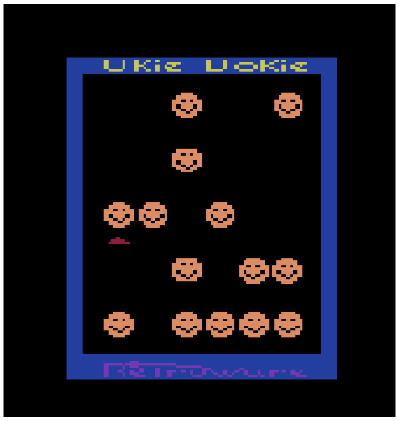
As a nice addition, Federmeyer has programmed a great hummable theme that plays as the game goes on. As the game gets faster, the song gets faster adding to the tension of the game. This is a great piece of additional work that adds to the flavor of Edtris 2600.

With nine levels of increasingly faster gameplay, Edtris 2600 is a must-have in your 2600 collection.

Ed Federmeyer has a web site at:
http://www.iit.edu/~fedeedw/

Okie Dokie by Bob Colbert
Platform: Atari 2600
Released in 1996

In 1996, Bob Colbert programmed, produced, created, and released his own 2600 game, Okie Dokie, in a limited 100-cart run. (These original releases are highly sought-after collectibles and, if you get a hold of one, it means you've actually had to kill a collector for it.) The game, still in production through Hozer Video, plays similar to Lights Out or Magic Square. A random pattern of "buttons" appears on-screen. When you push a button, it (and all buttons adjoining it) reverse their on/off sequence. The object of the game is to get the screen cleared of buttons.



For those game players who like puzzle games, this one will have you pulling your hair out in no time. The addictive puzzle-solving gameplay will have you looking for patterns to speed up the screen's blackout. Although you can just keep pushing buttons and eventually stumble upon a screen's solution, the game challenges you to keep your moves to a minimum. A running tally of how many button presses you've taken appears at the bottom of the screen.

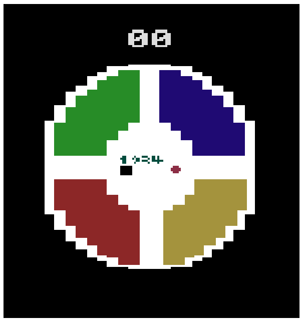
Okie Dokie has 31 built in levels. The first several are easier, being mirror images of itself. All you need to do is duplicate your efforts on either side. Later levels are chaotic patterns with no rhyme nor reason to them. You'd be lucky to stumble upon a solution in the later rounds.

Okie Dokie is one of those games that makes you want to play "just one more time." Sure you solved a screen in 10 moves...now can you do it in 9?

Bob Colbert has a website at:
http://members.home.com/rcolbert1/

Video Simon by Mark De Smet
Platform: Atari 2600
Released in 2000

At press-time, Video Simon is the newest homebrewed Atari cart released, based on the incredibly popular Milton Bradley electronic "Follow the Leader" game from the '70s and '80s. (Although the game's name is based on "Simon Says.")



When you first pop in Video Simon, you'll be treated to the image of the familiar saucer-shaped console. There are four colored lenses that flash and beep with a distinctive tone. Repeat the sequence. Everytime you're correct, Simon will repeat the sequence and add one more flash/tone. The longer you last, the longer the sequence to remember. And, as you go on, the game gets faster and faster. Soon, remembering the sequence becomes a challenge to your already taxed memory.

Video Simon has four levels of gameplay, including one where you challenge the computer to keep up with YOU. The game's graphics are outstanding, if only because it's great to see a classic electronic game from the '80s ported over to the classic video game console of the '80s. The tones of the game are a dead-on reproduction of the tones of the original.

I suggest gathering a few friends around the Atari at the next party and breaking out this little number. Who in your group can do as Video Simon says?

Mark De Smet has a web site at:
http://www.upl.cs.wisc.edu/~de-smet/

These homebrews are currently available on cartridge from Randy Critchfield at Hozer Video Games, P.O. Box 1332, Pepperell, MA 01463. Check out *http://www.netway.com/~hozervideo/index.html* for catalog and further details.

My Twenty Five Cents

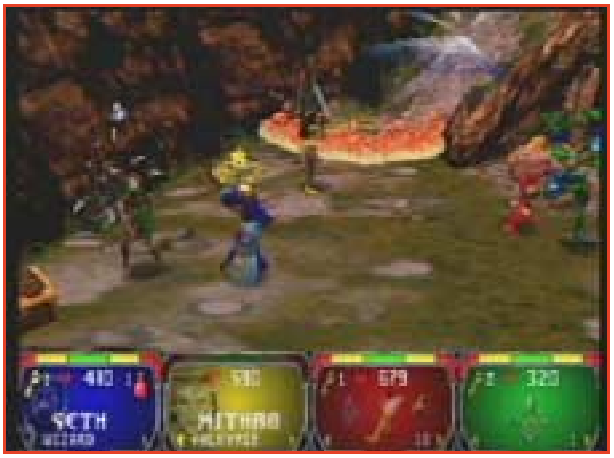
by Damien Quicksilver

Sex, Drugs, Rock 'N Roll, and Video Games

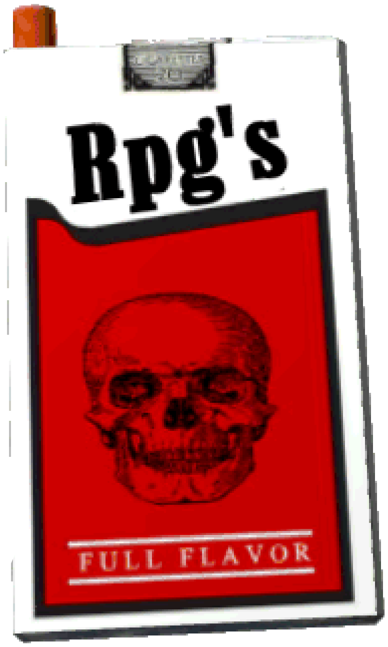
As humans, we think too much.
We alone among all creatures KNOW we are going to DIE.
This is because our analytical minds are too smart.
There's something wrong with everything if you analyze it enough.
Thinking causes pain.
Thinking drives you insane.
The more something makes you think, the worse it probably is.

Lucky for us, we can use recreation to fight against the evils of thought.
Traditionally, we've had sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll.
Then came video games.
They don't have the dangers of sex.
They aren't as addictive as drugs. And they give you something to do while listening to rock 'n roll.
Video games started out simple and fun. Then they got less simple... and less fun.
Nowadays, some of them are so complicated that you actually have to think.
The more something makes you think, the worse it probably is.

Complexity is the enemy of good gaming.
More features = Less fun
What's up with all the thinking in video games nowadays?
My little brother complained to me that Gauntlet Legends was a horrible game.
So I played it for awhile.
Seemed pretty cool to me.
"What's wrong with it?" I ask.



Gauntlet Legends



He explains to me that there's not enough to it.
He thinks the guy with an axe should swing it, not throw it.
He thinks there should be some sort of "sniper mode" if you choose the guy with a bow & arrow.
"But Gauntlet has always been like that," I say.
Of course, his reply is, "Yeah? Then Gauntlet sucks."
So I fired up an old Gauntlet game in one of my emulators on my computer to show it to him.
Sure enough, he thought it sucked.
What is the mentality of gamers nowadays?
Do they even want to have fun?

I'm not one to complain about things I have not experienced, however.
Recently I've been emulating a lot of RPGs (Role Playing Games)... the games I perceive as the pioneers of complicated gaming.
And I figured it out. RPGs are like cigarettes. Inherently bad, yet strangely addictive.
In fact, I think I prefer cigarettes to RPGs.
So here we go, the top five reasons cigarettes are better than RPGs.

5. People often smile while smoking a cigarette.
4. Even the heaviest smokers don't smoke for ten hours straight.
3. You don't have to think about smoking a cigarette.
2. If your lighter goes out, the world does NOT turn black.

and, the number one reason to smoke instead of play RPGs:

1. No matter how much you smoke, you only die once.

An RPG is like an interactive story. I often find myself playing not because I like the game, but because I like the story. This not only means that there is less short-term gratification than a game that is actually fun, but also that the game has almost NO replay value.
I mean, if a game is more like a book or a movie, then you will likely pick up a game and play it as often as you read a book or watch a movie.
Count how many times you've played your favorite video game. Now count how many times you've seen your favorite movie, or read your favorite book. You probably can't even count the video game, can you?
That's the way it should be.

Video games started out simple and fun. Then they got less simple... and less fun.

So let's stop it with the "sophisticated" games already!
Let's keep them as simple as possible.
Fun is what happens when brain cells are dying.
Give me Pong and a bong, Stampede and some weed.
Ever realize that driving games let you legally drive drunk?
Let's keep video games and ourselves as fun and happy as they can be... STUPID!

BEEFCAKE!!!!

by Earl Green

The Most Unexpected Retro Arcade Package Ever

I have to admit, this one just completely floored me. It's been sitting on my PlayStation game shelf for nearly half a year, and I've never even popped it into the machine. (Tough year, eh?) But when I did check it out, I was stunned. This thing is like *Arcade's Greatest Hits,* only with more fart jokes!

PlayStation
SOUTH PARK
CHEF'S LUV SHACK

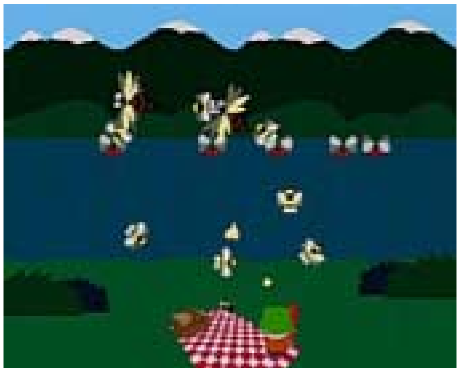
Don't Blame Canada

You have nobody to blame but Acclaim for making you miss this batch of retro makeovers. *South Park: Chef's Luv Shack* is marketed as a game show rip-off, but after every three questions, you enter a bonus round. And more often than not, those bonus rounds take the form of games which are recognizable to nearly *any* classic gamer. The "Bad Kitty" game pits you in the unfortunate role of the Cartman family's cat, climbing up ladders and avoiding the red bouncy balls that Eric Cartman rolls at you from the top floor. You've got to get to the top and eat Eric's pot pies. Sound familiar, *Donkey Kong* devotees?

It gets weirder. The "Snow Forts" game is a very thinly-disguised parody of Atari's classic *Warlords* game, only you're defending your snowman instead of your castle. Other than that, the game is identical to its inspiration. A pizza delivery game is basically a two-dimensional rip off of *Paperboy,* and the *Scuzzlebutt* game lifts elements of *Kickman* and *Kaboom!* Another round, ripping off *Galaga,* sees your South Park character of choice fending off bees at a picnic, while the *Asteroids* rip-off, *Asses In Space,* involves you blowing up as many space borne butts as you can. And the Go-Kart game is so much like the old Odyssey 2 pack-in *Spin-Out!* that it isn't even funny.

This Game Has Warped My Fragile Little Mind!

I'm not sure if this game is an exercise in brilliance, or a display of how low some software manufacturers will go to cash in as cheaply as possible on a license that cost them so much, they can't afford real game development.



Kyle Goes Galaga

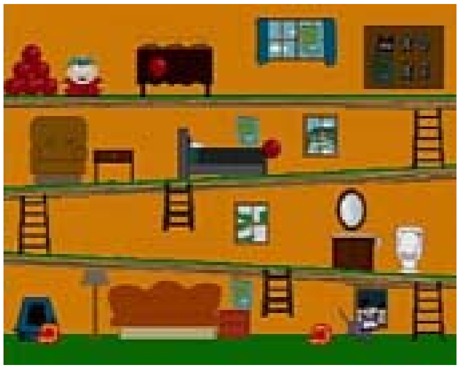
The South Park name alone may have kept Atari, Nintendo, and Namco from paying any attention to this title, which may be all that stands between Acclaim and a Cartman-sized lawsuit. (And we're talking post-Weight-Gain-4000 Cartman here, folks - the similarities are so close, I'm not sure Acclaim could even begin to make any excuses.)

Why would I even raise the issue of brilliance? Because *South Park: Chef's Luv Shack* is a party game; nothing more, nothing less. The developers likely intended this game to be played during social gatherings with an abundance of alcohol, thus preventing any players from thinking clearly enough to recognize the games. I seem to remember one Nolan Bushnell thinking more or less the same thing when he chased *Computer Space* down with the much simpler *Pong.*

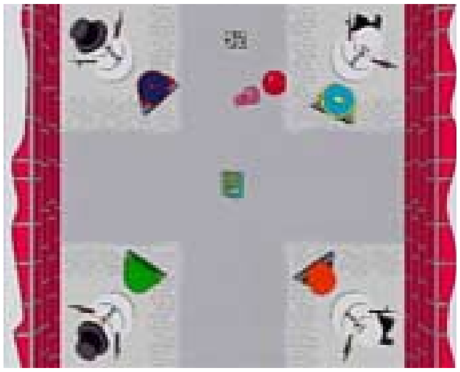
Is *Chef's Luv Shack* for everyone? God, no! If you're not a fan of South Park, steer clear of this one. It's easily the raunchiest of the three South Park video games to date, and it's not for the faint of heart. (There's a whack-a-mole rip-off in which you must blast a character called Chicken Lover before he can reach a helpless chicken. If you don't know who Chicken Lover is within the context of the South Park cartoon… trust me, you don't *wanna* know.) But if you're a South Park fan *and* a classic game aficionado, this game should jump to the top of your list - quick, before Acclaim gets sued by about half a dozen companies!

CGM

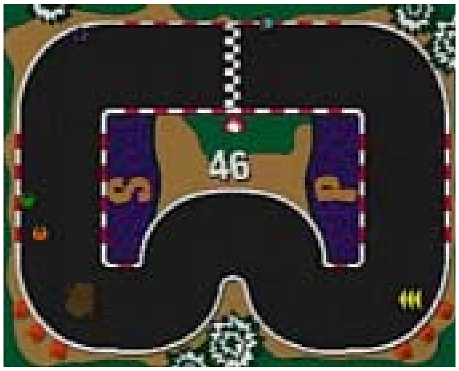
CHEESY POOFS



Cartman Kong



Snowlords



Go Kart/Spin-Out

To Knock Off Or Not to Knock Off

by Kyle Snyder

Many of us classic gamers became entranced with arcade games back in the early 80's. Magazine articles, TV news reports, and, of course, actually seeing blockbusters like Space Invaders, Asteroids, and Pac-Man wherever we went got us curious. Video arcades, however, were just entering their golden era at this point. They had been around since the mid 70's, but just weren't accessible in location or attractive to the average crowd.

Nevertheless, when Atari debuted the Video Computer System in 1977, it immediately took the gaming world by storm. Fairchilds were stored in the closet, Odysseys were relegated to the attic, and Pong units were sold at yard sales. Atari needed software, and FAST!!! Existing cartridges were selling well, and in an effort to expand the library, Atari looked back to the arcades for ideas. At that point, they had already adapted many of their arcade games, such as Canyon Bomber, Outlaw, and Breakout. But they had to look at other arcade titles, those not made by Atari, for inspiration. Many of those old arcade games, with the huge boxy cabinets and blocky black and white graphics, were released for the 2600 with brand new names, presumably to avoid licensing fees.

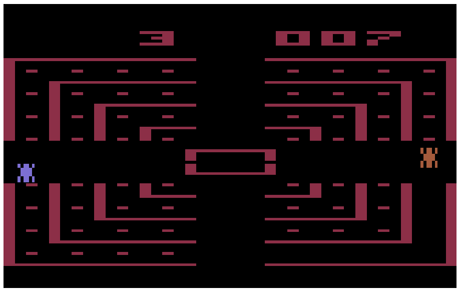
Take, for instance, Midway's 1976 coin-op, AMAZING MAZE. The computer generates a random maze with tiny little passages and tons of turns and dead ends. The player, or players, either race the clock to exit the maze, or compete against each other to see who can escape first. This was directly cloned in Atari's MAZE CRAZE, the only addition being extra variations and color graphics. Or how about HEAD-ON, a 1979 Gremlin coin-op involving a race car that drives around a track, eliminating dots as it goes. A computer controlled car travels in the opposite direction, trying to crash into the player's racer. Sounds like Atari's DODGE 'EM cart, doesn't it? And then there was CIRCUS, Exidy's first big arcade hit back in 1977. Help some wacky clowns pop rows of balloons by sliding a teeter-totter underneath them to help them gain altitude. Points are awarded for each balloon burst, and a bonus is given when a complete row is reduced to tatters. Here Atari only slightly hid the original name, by calling it CIRCUS ATARI.

This practice was not lost on other cartridge manufacturers. Activision, long reveled as a great innovator, borrowed a few early arcade titles themselves. DRAG STRIP, a 1977 Atari coin favorite, was trotted out under the Activision label as DRAGSTER. Likewise, AVALANCHE, a 1978 catch-the-rocks game from Atari was cutesified with a "mad bomber" and bombs featuring lit fuses. Of course, this would be the classic cart KABOOM! And, MEGAMANIA, while unique for its use of hamburgers, bow ties, and diamond rings as enemy craft... (Perhaps the designer had fears of getting fat, social gatherings, and commitment?) was really a close copy of Sega's 1980 arcade shooter, ASTRO BLASTER.

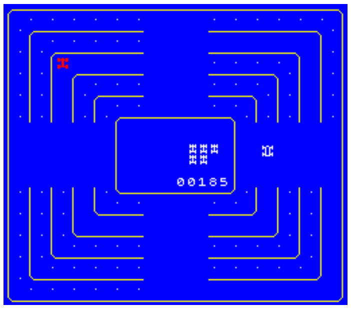
Even Imagic aped an arcade title once, although in a stripped down disguised form. Imagic's ATLANTIS cart borrows heavily from the 1981 Taito release COLONY 7. Both games feature airborne enemies attacking a stationary city, destroying the buildings one by one. The player has control of side mounted weapons that fire at an angle towards the enemies. Although the antagonists move in different patterns, and the arcade game adds two smart bomb style weapons, the similarities are unmistakable.

It's interesting in today's lawsuit happy world to note that there was a time, not too long ago, when companies regularly borrowed ideas from one another. Could you imagine that happening now?**
Let's play MARIO THE HEDGEHOG on my PlayStation, shall we????

***Ed note: It's happened! See page 44!*



Dodge 'em (Atari)



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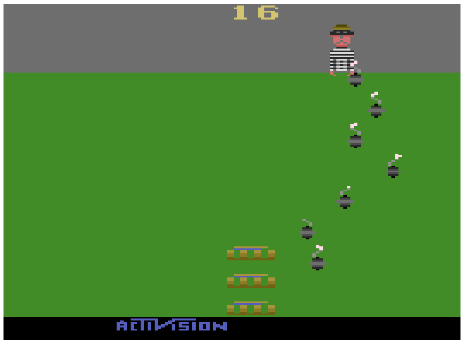

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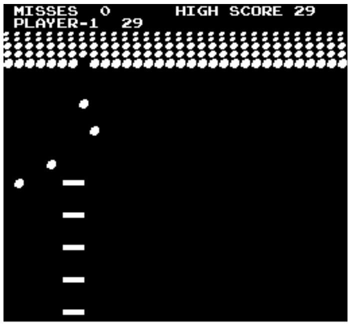
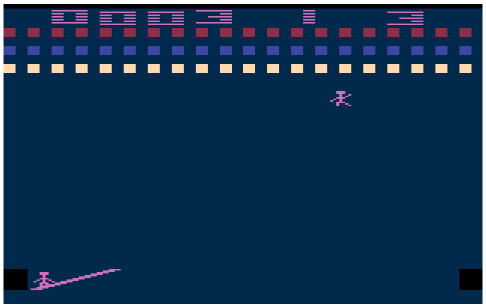
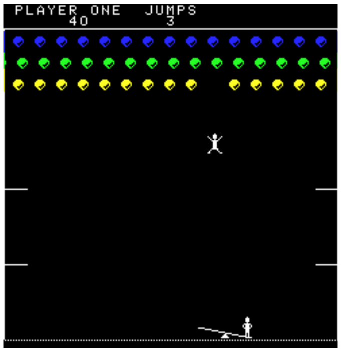


Avalanche (Exidy)

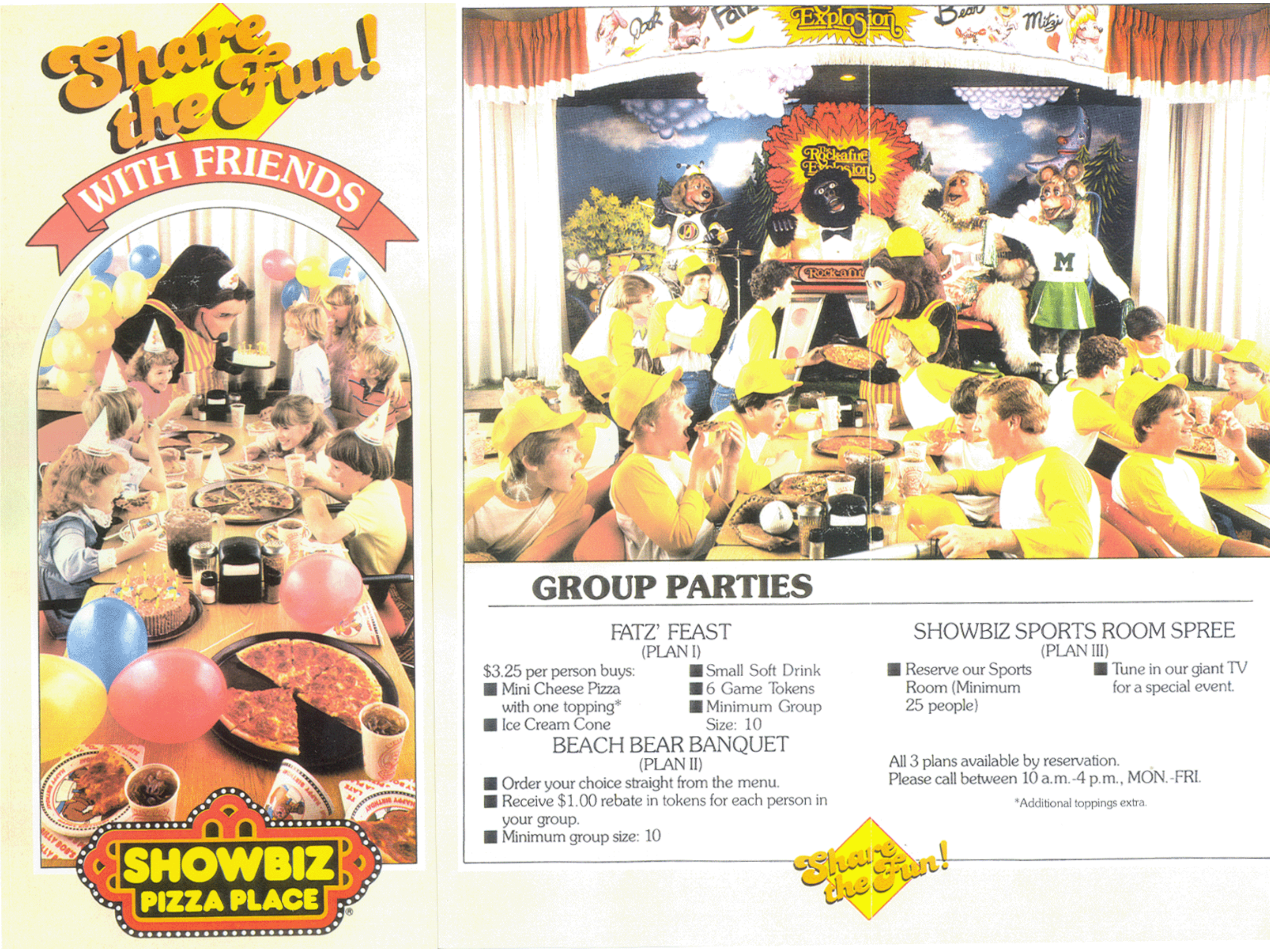


Circus Atari (Atari)



Circus (Exidy)

Classic Advertisement 1983


Share the Fun!
WITH FRIENDS
SHOWBIZ PIZZA PLACE®
The Rockafire Explosion
Explosion
Share the Fun!

GROUP PARTIES

FATZ' FEAST
(PLAN I)

$3.25 per person buys:

- Mini Cheese Pizza with one topping*
- Ice Cream Cone
- Small Soft Drink
- 6 Game Tokens
- Minimum Group Size: 10

BEACH BEAR BANQUET
(PLAN II)

- Order your choice straight from the menu.
- Receive $1.00 rebate in tokens for each person in your group.
- Minimum group size: 10

SHOWBIZ SPORTS ROOM SPREE
(PLAN III)

- Reserve our Sports Room (Minimum 25 people)
- Tune in our giant TV for a special event.

All 3 plans available by reservation. Please call between 10 a.m.-4 p.m., MON.-FRI.

*Additional toppings extra.

Submitted by David Redell

The Atari 7800:

A Closer Look

by Patrick Wong

Ever wondered what would happen if the Atari 2600 mated with the Atari 5200?

When the videogame world crashed in 1983, the gaming universe needed a savior. Atari had a system in mind: The Atari 7800 ProSystem, which featured a design that was a hybrid of previous Atari game systems. It had the sleek, state of the art design of the Atari 5200 and the size of the Atari 2600 (closer to the Sega Genesis to be exact), a huge silver streak running across the middle of the system, four buttons near the bottom (Power, Pause, Select, and Reset), two joystick ports, difficulty switches, and an expansion port. The 7800 had all the right touches that made her a beauty to look at. It also featured an attractive price, about $120 dollars. The Atari 7800 would be the last system to be developed under the Warner Bros. regime.

Atari really wanted to make this system right. First, the controllers. Atari didn't want a repeat of the 5200's controllers disaster, so they borrowed the same futuristic design but removed the numeric pad and function buttons, made it smaller, and replaced the horrible non-centering joystick with one that would center perfectly. This controller would rival Atari's own 2600 standard joystick.

What about Atari 2600 compatibility? No problem! Atari promised that they had learned their mistake from their 5200's 2600 adapter and would delight gamers by allowing the 7800 to run all of the 2600's huge library of games without the need for an adapter or add-on!

How about expandability? Rumor had it that Atari laser disc technology was right around the corner, so Atari made sure an expansion slot was built into the left side of the system. Not only could you connect an Atari laser disc player, but a keyboard add-on was also in the works, which would allow the user to attach other Atari related products as well (Atari's disk drives, tape recorders, printers, modems, etc.). Atari really wanted game players to get a taste of Atari computing.

Atari's game plan was simple: Design a videogame system that offers a large library of games, great graphics capability, Atari 2600 compatibility, and future expandability. Atari was certain that this would be the system to turn the videogame industry around. It all sounded very promising...then the Tramiel family (founder of Commodore computers) bought the Atari videogames and computer division from Warner Bros. and shelved the system for almost two years.

By the time Atari dusted off the 7800 and sent her out into the world, it was 1987. She awoke to find an environment where the Nintendo Entertainment System would single handedly turn the videogame industry around and become the world's number one system. Atari would have a lot of catching up to do.

Atari was a couple of years too late and the 7800 would almost certainly have stumbled and gone up to the Silicon Valley in the sky had there not been an NES shortage that would allow gamers to take a second look at the 7800.

Atari's first selection of games were all impressive remakes of arcade classics like Centipede, Food Fight, Galaga, Joust, Robotron, and Xevious. All the titles would feature the great graphics and intermissions that their arcade counterparts had made famous. Titles like Ms. Pac-Man, Dig Dug, and Asteroids turned out as good as, and in Asteroid's case, *better,* than the arcade originals! It was a shame that Atari had waited so long in releasing a system that had so much potential. By the late 80's, the world wanted Nintendo, and as great as these Atari games were, they were just remakes of yesterday's old arcade greats.

Atari would frantically try to introduce original titles and succeeded in porting some great computer hits, from Accolade's Ace of Aces and Fight Night; to Broderbund's Karateka; to EA's Touchdown Football, One on One Basketball with Dr. J and Larry Bird, and SkyFox; to Eypx's Summer Games and Winter Games; to Lucasfilm's Ball-Blazer and Rescue on the Fractalus. Unfortunately, these were all old computer remakes; even though titles like BallBlazer, Rescue on the Fractalus, and Karateka were more graphically impressive than Atari's own 5200 and computer versions, they were all past their prime.

Atari would try to battle the NES with some of Nintendo's own titles. Mario Bros., Donkey Kong, and Donkey Kong Jr. were all well done but unfortunately, like almost all of the 7800's library, they were all outdated games.

There were some awful titles as well, such as Atari's remake of Broderbund's classic Choplifter and Technos' Mat Mania Challenge, which were barely playable. Atari's Ninja Golf was utterly ridiculous. Epyx's Impossible Mission lived up to its billing as "Impossible" because the game was released with a fatal bug that prevented the player from completing the mission! How these titles were ever released is a mystery in itself.

By the early 90's, the Atari 7800 would finally get some good original arcade and platform games. Titles ranged from Atari's Crossbow, Dark Chambers, Desert Falcon, Ikari Warriors, and Tower Toppler; to Activision's Double Dragon and Rampage; to Absolute Entertainment's Title Match Pro Wrestling and Kung Fu Master. Atari would even try to develop a Super-Mario-esque title called Scrapyard Dog but all this would be too little, too late and Atari would finally put the system to rest for good. Some credit has to be given to Atari's loyal supporters for never waning in their demand for new titles. In the end, the Atari 7800 would end up having one of the smallest libraries of original games for any system, falling far short of its original promise: a system with many games.

What about Atari's other promises? While the 7800 was compatible with a lot of the 2600's library, a large number of 3rd party titles would end up being incompatible. How about future expandability? As you can guess, the keyboard was scrapped while in the developmental stages and the wondrous laser disc player ended up being vaporware like so many of the future Atari products to come. The expansion port would end up being removed in later models.

In the end, the Atari 7800 was a foreshadow of the new Atari company that was to come. Lots of vaporware and promises broken.

Classic Games At A Premium

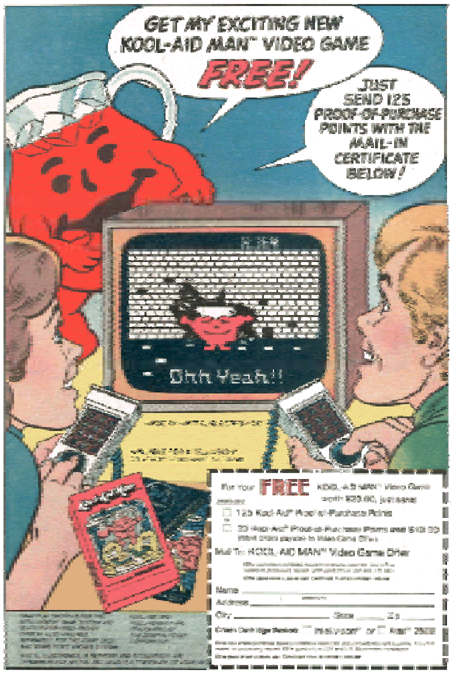
by Tim Snider

In the 1980's, your morning breakfast cereal often served up more than processed enriched flour, pounds of sugar, and colors not normally found in nature. Sometimes, if you were lucky or if you were willing to do a little collecting, your morning bowl of Sugar-Frosted ChocoBrix could also get you an Atari cartridge. Heck, back then, Fido's bowl of *dog chow* could get you an Atari cart.

During Atari's heyday, it seemed like every company was fighting to get a piece of the video game market. Everybody had an offer or contest where you could buy, win, or save up for a game for your VCS. Saving up coupons, entering contests, and filling out mail-in offers were great ways to expand your game collection. (Hey, $40 per game was a lot of money when you were 10 years old.)

One company that got into the video game premium frenzy during the '80s was Kool Aid. The Kool Aid Man game was originally only offered through Kool Aid Wacky Warehouse offers. By saving up the proofs-of-purchases found on the empty packets, you could send away for the game. Later though, Kool Aid Man was available in retail stores.

Even companies that weren't immediately connected with children got into the Atari game premium business. Johnson & Johnson offered "Tooth Protectors" as a premium with their toothpastes. As I hear it, "Lost Luggage" by Apollo was originally designed to appeal to business travelers who were away a lot. (I don't doubt that an airline may have tried offering it as a bonus for frequent flier miles.)


GET MY EXCITING NEW KOOL-AID MAN™ VIDEO GAME FREE!
JUST SEND 125 PROOF-OF-PURCHASE POINTS WITH THE MAIL-IN CERTIFICATE BELOW!
Ohh Yeah!!
FREE
Mail To: KOOL-AID MAN™ Video Game Offer
Name
Address
City
State
Zip

The most notorious of these premium classic video game offers is Chase the Chuckwagon, available only as a mail-in offer from Ralston Purina's Chuck Wagon dog food. Now, the game is a highly-sought collectible because so few folks sent away for it. It makes sense. How many kids read the side of a 10-pound bag of kibble looking for video game offers?

However, if a company wanted a direct pipeline into the kid consciousness, the best place to do it was on the side of a cereal box. It wasn't unusual to see Atari cart premiums offered on the side of your early morning repast. Most video game commercials aired on Saturday mornings - when kids were planted in front of their TVs for the early morning cartoons. And what are those kids spooning down by the truckload?

One contest that was offered was found on boxes of Cap'n Crunch cereal. The "toy prize inside" was a little wallet (made of some cheap cardboardish material, as I recall) that a child could carry money, baseball cards, or whatever in. However, in 5,000 of those wallets was a certificate good for a complete Atari set-up. I'm not certain how successful a contest it was, but I can vouch that I ate nothing but Cap'n Crunch for an entire summer.

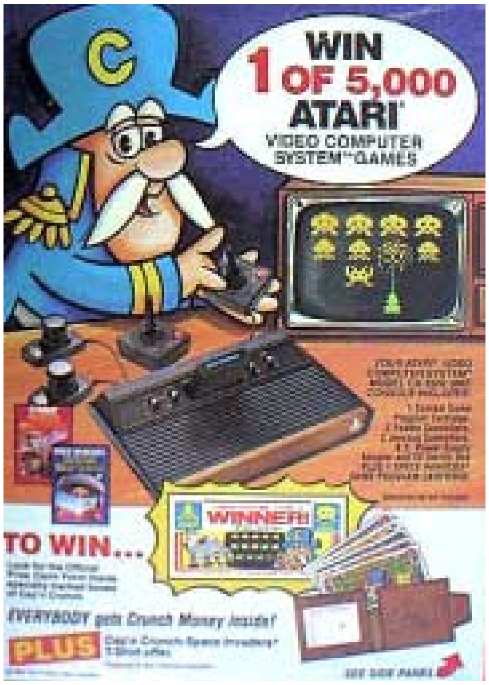
Another cereal company that got into the Atari cart offer business was General Mills. General Mills owned Parker Brothers, which was churning out some great Atari video games in the '80s. So, it was only natural that the two divisions combine.

Found on boxes of General Mills cereals was a coupon for a free Parker Brothers Atari cartridge. By mailing in the coupon, proofs-of-purchase from four Parker Brothers carts, and $5 shipping, you had your choice of a free Frogger, Star Wars: Empire Strikes Back, Spiderman, or Q*Bert. I remember visiting friends and asking for the proofs from their PB cart instructions so I could get a free game. (In fact, most instructions for PB carts that you'll find nowadays are missing that corner proof-of-purchase for this very reason.)

And, it goes without saying that, if we're talking about cereal companies with Atari game connections, Quaker Oats and U.S. Games went hand-in-hand for many years.

Even today, cereal companies are offering videogame premiums, with CDs being shrink-wrapped to every other box out there. Classic games like Activision's Greatest Hits and Asteroids have been turning up strapped to cereal boxes, and Cap'n Crunch recently offered "Cap'n Crunch" video game with proofs-of-purchase. I'd race out and buy several copies if I were you. Today's cheesy video game premium may be tomorrow's Chase the Chuckwagon.

CGM


WIN 1 OF 5,000 ATARI® VIDEO COMPUTER SYSTEM™ GAMES
TO WIN...
WINNER!
EVERYBODY gets Crunch Money Inside!
PLUS

FLASH FORWARD

"AOL Anywhere"

by Patrick Wong

In what's being billed as the biggest corporate union of all time, the pending merger of America Online and Time-Warner proves that to be the leader in the Internet world, you must not only have the largest paying subscription base in the world, but you must also offer the best and most information.

While most onlookers may view this merger as just a marriage between the so-called "New Media" and "Old-Media," it also signifies a return to the "Golden Age" of Information Services. Virtually, we'll be going back to a time when a leading online service provided more than just online chat, e-mail and an Internet portal; a time when they also provided a significant source for information without ever having to journey outside a service's servers. Today's Internet Providers are clearly lacking in this one area: information.

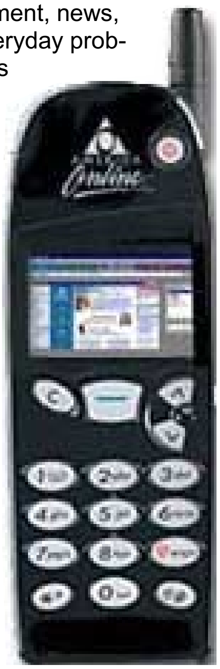
How many times have you logged on to your favorite Internet Provider to look up information on a particular subject only to find that the site doesn't offer anything on this subject? You would then have to "go to" another site where you may only be able to find a little bit of the information you were seeking. Even after that, you would have to hit another site looking for more info. Maybe that next link, page, or site won't load, or worse, doesn't exist anymore. We've all been through this frustrating process, but the merger could significantly improve this situation.

Journey back to the 80s where we had an ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) and early GUI (Graphics Users Interface) front end based Internet world that was ruled by someone other than AOL. The big three at the time: H&R Block's CompuServe, General Electric's GEnie and IBM/Sears' Prodigy were all popular information services with a large subscriber base ranging from the tens of thousands to a million. They offered virtually the same things most Internet Providers offer today: E-mail, online chat, forums, message boards, up to the minute news, research databases, encyclopedias, stock trading, shopping, and multiplayer games.

These classic networks, however, offered one major advantage that today's networks don't: everything was available on one service's network. A user never really had to "go to" or "telnet" to another website or server to obtain the information he or she needed. These services were rich with information and it was all available on the service a user subscribed to.

"While most onlookers may view this merger as just a marriage between the so-called "New Media" and "Old-Media," it also signifies a return to the "Golden Age" of Information Services."

By having all their members on one network, instead of surfing from one site to another, these companies created a cyber-community where people frequently visited forums and posted messages (discussing everything from computing to entertainment, news, television, and their everyday problems). Message boards were usually jammed with interesting comments and thoughts, as opposed to the spam and junk posting problems we encounter with many of today's Internet services (junk e-mail and spam postings are synonymous with AOL). Today's message boards are sadly less engaging than they once were. One only has to venture into an AOL forum to find that the posting boards are usually dormant, with new postings few and far between. Most users post their messages on various websites and web pages scattered all over the Internet, making it impossible for a centralized place of public discourse. We've all seen postings on websites where one user copies/pastes another surfer's comments from another website. Clearly, there is a need for a centralized service for information and public discourse.



During this period, AOL was just a wannabe specialist online service catering at first to Atari computer users (known as Control Video Corp. back then) and then later to Commodore 64 owners (Quantum Computer Services). It wasn't until the early 90s that AOL changed to their current name, discontinued support of the Commodore and Apple II platforms, and became a major player in the online services arena. AOL would offer two distinct features during the course of the early to mid 90s that would separate them from the rest of the field. This would allow the service to slowly chip away at online service leaders like CompuServe and Prodigy, thus taking over the online services world.

What were these two distinct features? The first feature was AOL's basic subscription plan. At $9.95 a month, AOL would allow its user a guaranteed 5 hours a month access. While other services like CompuServe would offer lower hourly rates, this option clearly gave Internet users a chance at substantially lower Internet service access costs without having to rack up a big bill. CompuServe would later counter with a basic service plan that would allow users to use its basic services, like e-mail and news, for an unlimited time while having to pay per hour for premium services like chat, forums, and games. Internet users clearly wanted access to all of a service's features without the hassle of worrying about basic and premium services. If an AOL user ran out of their basic hours, they would have to pay $2.95 for each additional hour.

The second feature was AOL's clear support of the World Wide Web. The web would be the biggest consumer hit since the Nintendo Game Boy and the Sony Walkman. The hype to get on the web was intense, and AOL would allow its users easy access to the web through their service. While CompuServe would support the web as well, they would mistakenly charge the web as a premium service, thus making users pay by the hour for something that AOL would cover as part of their basic service plan. With their basic service plan and their support of the web, AOL would go on to slowly wrestle control of the Internet away from CompuServe.

> ***"...no one could've imagined that by early 2000, AOL would announce they would acquire Time-Warner as well and become one of the largest media companies."***

With the web craze in full swing by the mid 90s, AOL would go on to post record profits with its subscriber base soaring past 6 million (Note: In May 2000, the SEC - Securities and Exchange Commission - slapped America Online with a $3.5 million fine for financial reporting violations in the fiscal years of 1995 and 1996—AOL reported profits for six of eight quarters instead of their actual losses— while competitors like Delphi and GEnie lost money and almost completely faded away.) took everyone by surprise because almost every industry insider expected Internet companies to continue to lose money for some time to come.

In late '96, AOL would revolutionize the Internet world by offering unlimited access to the Internet and thus begin putting the final nails on CompuServe and Prodigy's coffins. By allowing companies to advertise banners on their service as a means to offset the loss of hourly charges, AOL would turn the private medium into an open door medium where any company could get their message across to millions of Internet subscribers by simply advertising with AOL. In many ways, it's just like a radio or television station taking advertising except the user can choose whether or not to bother with it.

> ***"Someday soon, no matter where you are on the Information Superhighway, all roads will lead to AOL."***

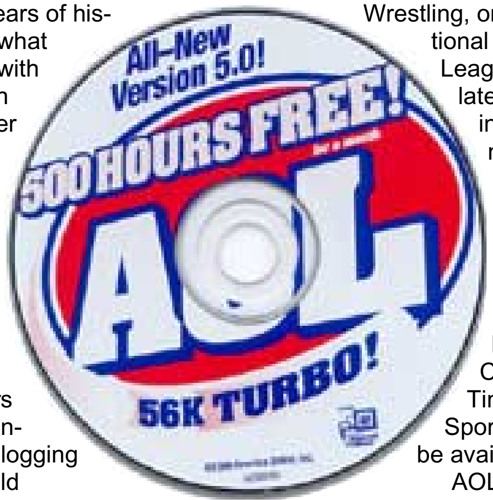
By late 97, AOL would officially become the world's largest Internet provider when it acquired CompuServe from H&R Block (H&R Block would sell CompuServe to AOL and World-Comm). No one could've imagined that CompuServe's parent company would grow tired of its aging Information Service and sell out to AOL. Then again, no one could've imagined that by early 2000, AOL would announce they would acquire Time-Warner as well and become one of the largest media companies.

If merged with Time-Warner, AOL would gain direct ownership of all the creative and intellectual properties of a company with over 78 years of history. Imagine what AOL could do with properties such as Time-Warner Books & Magazines, Time-Warner Interactive, Warner Bros Television & Movies, Time-Warner Records, and Turner Entertainment.

The results could be astonishing, with web users benefiting most from this union. Off hand, the days of logging in to various web sites could be over. Would you like to read the latest issue of your favorite online magazine like Fortune, Life, Money, or People? Want to watch a streaming video of a Warner Bros. movie, television show, or original webisodes from Time-Warner Online? Maybe an interview with your favorite celebrity about his or her new movie? How about listening to the latest samples of your favorite Warner Bros. recording artist? Well, just click and you're set. There may not be any need to remember a dozen screen names and passwords to access these sites. No more hassles of having to join an e-mail newsletter or taking a survey before you listen to a new release. All you have to be is a member of AOL.

Would you like to preview the latest Time-Warner Interactive arcade or home videogame? Through AOL, you could possibly be the first to test, play, chat, find hints, and post messages and info on any number of new titles coming out without the hassle of visiting numerous gaming websites. How about possibly playing the game against another member? With over 22 million subscribers, someone has to be up for a challenge at all times of the day or night!

Want the latest news? How about being able to select from a few sources all from one service? You could choose the industry standard, Associated Press, CNN, or New York 1 News. How about catching up with the latest adventures of Bat-Man & Robin, Bat-Man Beyond, Superman, or another DC hero or villain? The latest issue could be available for download on AOL! What about sports? Do you follow Major League Baseball, WCW Wrestling, or the National Hockey League? All the latest scores, interviews, matches, and results from all your favorite news sources like Sports Illustrated, CNN/SI, and Time-Warner Sports may all be available on AOL.



An All Too Familiar Looking CD

What about Internet users who don't subscribe to AOL? That may not be a problem either. Just log on through AOL's web page at "www.aol.com" and you may have access to some of the same features that AOL users may soon enjoy. You're sure to find something of interest to you without having to surf endlessly. A great deal of information will be available to you on one site even if you subscribe to another Internet Provider.

Let's not forget that AOL users will still have access to all of AOL's regular features like Instant Messaging, Digital City, AOL MovieFone, forums and message boards. It's almost a "can't lose" when you factor in everything this merger brings.

What about AOL's other dealings? AOL agreed recently to work with Sprint and other Wireless Services. Could you be receiving your AOL e-mail and Instant Messages from anywhere on your cell phone any day now? How about accessing AOL in your kitchen? AOL and Gateway have teamed up to bring small Internet appliances for your home as early as this coming holiday season. The world is about to get more AOL from anywhere.

One thing is for certain; the merger between America Online and Time-Warner will create an information and marketing juggernaut! Someday soon, no matter where you are on the Information Superhighway, all roads will lead to AOL.

Classifieds

WANTED: Gamate and Mega Duck cartridges, Timex/Sinclair cartridges, Voltmace Mark III cartridges, MPT-02/MPT-03 cartridges, Romtec Colorvision cartridges, and other obscure/odd stuff! Russ Perry Jr, 2175 S Tonne Dr. #105, Arlington Hts IL 60005, slapdash@enteract.com

WANTED: Entex Adventure Vision gaming system and/or cartridges. Items be boxed or loose, working or not, any condition wanted. Contact ima-vidiot@stny.rr.com or visit www.adventurevision.com for more details.

WANTED: If you have SMS James "Buster" Douglas for sale or trade, contact me! coleman@wantree.com.au

WANTED: 2600 protos, NTSC Ikari Warriors (trade for PAL version?), LockJaw, Midnight Magic (c)1986, Saving Mary, Shooting Arcade (Atari) 1984 Rev A poster/catalog ANY Atari-related merchandise, Atari Music CD's vols. 1 & 2, Star Raiders Kid's book, manuals, boxes, magazine, etc. Scott Stilphen scottith@ptd.net

BUY/TRADE/SELL: Atari, Colecovision, Vectrex, Intellivision, Odyssey, all classics. Thousands of classic and modern trade items available, or I'll pay high $$$! JeffGamer@ipof.fla.net/305-378-6133

FOR SALE: Games for Atari, ColecoVision, Intellivision, Famicon, Sega SG/SL, Mark III, Virtual Boy, MSX and others. **WANTED:** 32x Darxide, SMS Street Fighter II, Powerstrike II, NES Hotslots, Corvette ZR1, Saturn, Raident Silvergun, Atari 400/800 Tapper, Tutankham, Contact Edward Villalpando, 13525 Utica Street, Whittier, CA 90605

Wanted: Vintage Pac-Man tie as advertised in the back of *Score!* By Ken Uston. Also a Liberator T-shirt by Atari. Contact Lee K. Seitz at lkseitz@hiwaay.net with ask-

Wanted: Free Classified Ads.

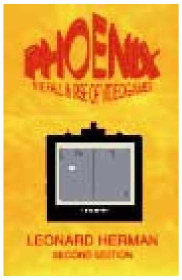
Got something to trade, buy or sell? Too many games or systems clogging your closets? Place a free ad with us and we'll publish it in our next issue.

Ads are limited to 30 words and must be classic gaming related. Business ads not accepted. Please contact us for business rates.

E-mail your ad to:
cav@classicgamer.com

Or mail to:
Classic Gamer Magazine
7770 Regents Rd. #113-293
San Diego, CA 92122

Contest Extended! Winners to be announced next issue!



Win an autographed copy of
"Phoenix - The Fall and Rise of Videogames"
by Leonard Herman.

Classic Gamer Magazine is giving away two autographed copies of Leonard Herman's authoritative book about the history of videogames.

But ya gotta earn it!

We're looking for aspiring Longfellows and Maya Angelous!

Send either an original classic videogame poem or Haiku and we'll award Phoenix as a prize in each category.

One prize per category will be awarded.
Winners and select entries will be printed in a future issue.

Poem Example:

There once was a man who would boast, "I'm the man who can eat the most" Although he ate lots He ate only dots And occasional side-dish of ghost.

- *Damien Quicksilver*

Haiku Example:

(A Haiku consists of a 3 line stanza with a 5,7,5 syllable pattern)

Donkey Kong climbs up
Crazy barrels do descend
Die Mario! Die!

- *too embarrassed to admit*

Send in your entry (with your contact info) to:

Classic Gamer Magazine Poetry Contest
7770 Re[illegible]ts Ro[illegible] #[illegible]
San Die[illegible] CA 9[illegible]22

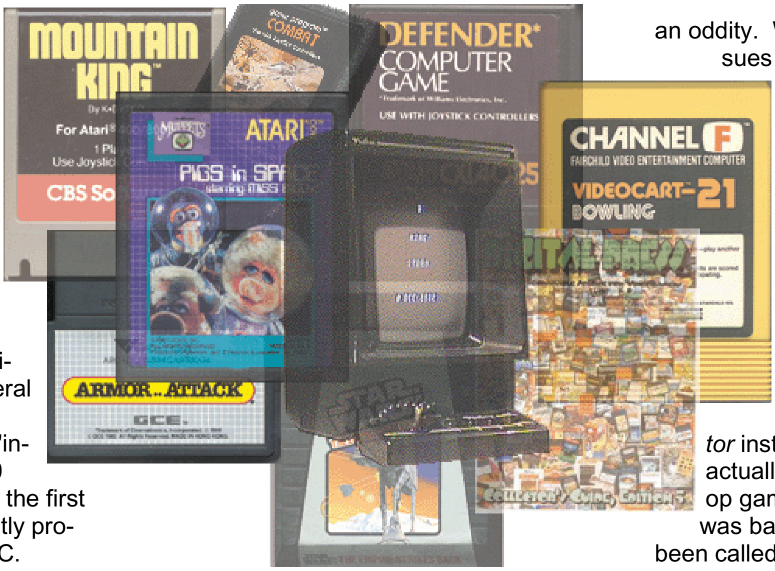
EXPIRED

Or e-mail to: cav@classicgamer.com

CVG 101

The Comic Book Connection

-By Lee K. Seitz-


MOUNTAIN KING
For Atari
CBS So
COMBAT
DEFENDER COMPUTER GAME
USE WITH JOYSTICK CONTROLLERS
ATARI
PIGS in SPACE
CHANNEL F
FAIRCHILD VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT COMPUTER
VIDEOCART-21 BOWLING
ARMOR ATTACK
GCE
DIGITAL PRESS
COLLECTOR'S GUIDE EDITION

In the early 1980s, video games were everywhere as everyone was trying to cash in on the booming video game business. This included the comic book companies. First of all, both DC and Marvel, two of the largest publishers at the time, were licensing their characters for use in video games; the primary examples being the Superman and Spider-Man Atari 2600 games. (For more examples, just flip through the previous issue of CGM.) When it came to linking video games and comics, DC may have had an edge because both it and Atari were, for a time, owned by Warner Communications. Atari included several small, DC-produced comic books, called "pack-ins" or "in-packs," with their Atari 2600 games. What I believe was the first one, however, was apparently produced without the help of DC.

Yars' Revenge: The Qotile Ultimatum was a short, eight page comic that served as a prolog to Howard Scott Warshaw's first Atari 2600 game. It explained the origin of the Yars, the reason (more or less) they were fighting the Qotile, and even how to play the game. If it had included the game version matrix, it could have almost been substituted for the instruction manual. The story, by Hope Shafer, was rather simplistic, but the art by Frank Cirocco, Ray Garst, and Hiro Kimura was well done. It was not a bad first effort, but apparently Atari's new parent, Warner Communications, decided it would be more expedient to have another Warner company, DC, handle the pack-ins from then on. (This is conjecture on my part as Yars' Revenge and Defender, the first game to include an Atari Force comic, were both released in 1982, so I'm not 100% certain which came first.)

DC pack-ins debuted with a series of comics about a science fiction team named Atari Force. The use of the name "Atari" was explained as standing for "Advanced Technology And Research Institute." The series opened in 2005 on an Earth recovering from the Five Day War; this war irreparably damaged the Earth's ecosystem. As a result, ATARI sent a group of five international adventurers out in *Scanner One*, a starship that could travel to parallel universes, where they searched for a new planet to which Earth's population would be moved. As you might guess, these comics were more involved than the one from Yars' Revenge and featured the talents of known comic book creators. The writers were Gerry Conway and Roy Thomas, while the art was handled by Ross Andru or Gil Kane, and Dick Giordano.

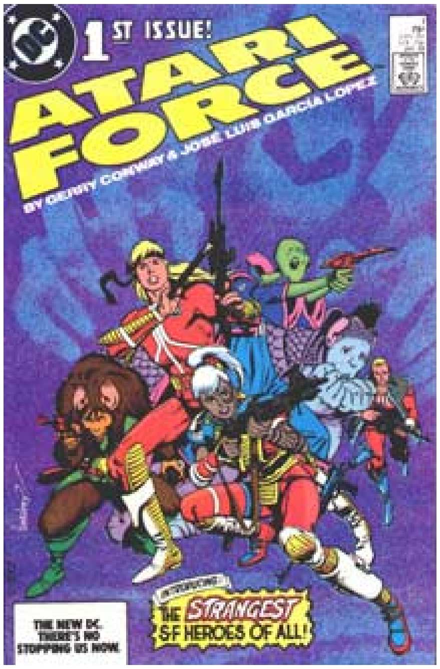
The first two issues, which introduced the team members, came with the Defender and Berzerk cartridges and had little to do with the games.

The third pack-in came with Star Raiders and was more directly related to the game.

Issue number four, which came with Phoenix, was something of an oddity. Whereas the previous issues weighed in at 48 pages, this one was only 16 pages long. And Atari Force only played a minor role. This story also appeared as a bonus feature in *New Teen Titans* #27 and *DC Comics Presents* #53. There were several differences between the pack-in and the bonus feature; the biggest being that in the bonus feature, the ship was called the *Liberator* instead of the *Phoenix*. Atari actually went on to create a coin-op game called Liberator, which was based on the story and has been called a reverse Missile Command. It even featured the Atari Force logo on the marquee!

Finally, the fifth pack-in came with Galaxian and featured the story of Atari Force finally finding a new planet to colonize. According to articles that appeared in *Atari Age* magazine (the magazine of the official Atari Club), there were actually more stories planned. It would appear that someone decided to cut the pack-ins short in order to prepare for the debut of the full-sized *Atari Force* comic.

This series debuted on newsstands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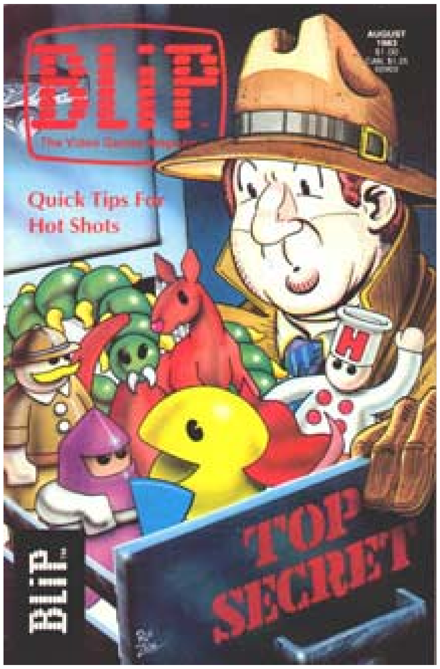
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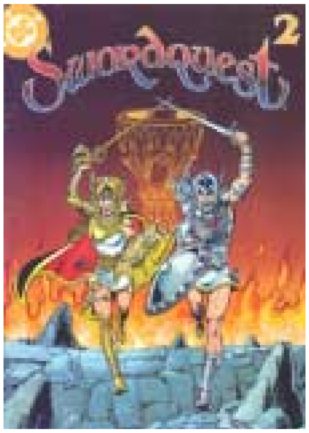
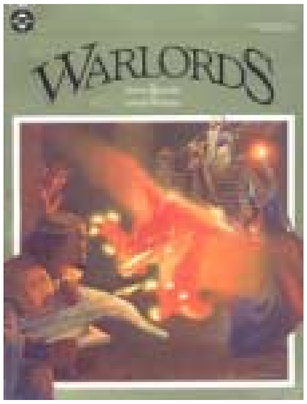


and at comic book shops towards the end of 1983. It featured two children of the original Atari Force, Martin Champion (leader of the original team), and an interesting cast of aliens. They fought against a reincarnated Dark Destroyer, who had also been the recurring enemy of the original Atari Force. The series lasted for 20 issues, was brought back for a special the following year, and has not been heard of since. The primary creators of the first dozen or so issues were Gerry Conway (writer) and Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez (penciller); wrapping up the series were Mike Baron as writer and Eduardo Barreto as penciller. Ricardo Villagran inked the majority of the issues.

The reasons for the title's cancellation were unclear. In the final issue, editor Andy Helfer stated DC knew when they started that the story would have a definite ending. However, one can't help but wonder if the break-up and sale of Atari by Warner and the video game crash of 1984 didn't also factor in. I don't have sales figures, but *Amazing Heroes*, a magazine about comics, included *Atari Force* in its list of the ten best books of 1984. Regardless, because the series was short-lived and independent of any major superhero "universe," today you can find back issues in the bargain bins of comic book stores (if you can find them at all). You can find out more about Atari Force at my own Atari Force Headquarters web site (http://home.hiwaay.net/~lkseitz/comics/AtariForce/).

Atari Force was not DC's only attempt at bringing video games to comic books. They also produced two graphic novels based on Atari's games. The first was *Star Raiders* by Elliot S. Maggin (writer) and Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez (artist). This was actually DC's very first graphic novel and it predated the full-sized *Atari Force* series. It had a brief cameo appearance of the original Atari Force from their adventure in the third pack-in. From there it went on to tell the story of what happened after they left. It's an entertaining read and worth searching out at comic book shops.



DC's other video game-based graphic novel was *Warlords*. (Not to be confused with their unrelated comic book series called *Warlord*.) This fantasy story by Steve Skeates (writer) and David Wenzel (artist) told of a troll named Dwayne and his somewhat reluctant efforts to unify his world, which was divided into four kingdoms. The leaders of the four kingdoms were a set of brothers who were constantly at war. Beyond that, the story has little relation to the video game it was based on. Overall, it's not bad, but I personally wouldn't spend a lot to get it. I was able to get my copy fairly inexpensively on eBay (www.ebay.com), although you may also find it at comic book stores.

Returning to the topic of DC's pack-in comics, shortly after Atari Force debuted, Atari began their series of SwordQuest games. The idea behind these games was that players could win valuable prizes by buying and playing the games. During game play, players would get clues for where to look in the accompanying comic book for a piece of the puzzle, which was a word phrase. Sending in the complete puzzle to Atari got one considered for the contest. The creators behind the comic books (which were much better than the actual games) were largely the same as those handling the Atari Force pack-ins. Gerry Conway and Roy Thomas again wrote the series and Dick Giordano inked it. The penciller this time, however, was fan favorite George Perez. Together these creators told the story of twin thieves, Torr and Tarra, and their quest through four worlds for the Sword of Ultimate Sorcery. Unfortunately, the sale of Atari Corp. to Jack Tramiel caused Atari to stop the contest. The third game and comic, WaterWorld, is very difficult to find, while the fourth game, AirWorld, was never started. The AirWorld comic was started, at least as far as plotting goes, but it's unknown whether any art was done or where any of this work is now. You can find scans of all the released comics on the Internet at http://www.tripoint.org/sq/sq.html.

YARS' REVENGE
ATARI
A Warner Communications Company
THE QOTILE ULTIMATUM!

The final pack-in DC did for Atari was Centipede. This comic was much more cartoonish than the previous ones. The story, by Howard Post and Andrew Gutelle (with art by Howard Post and Robert Smith), was about a young elf named Oliver who lived in a forest and was friends with a centipede, spider, flea, and scorpion. An evil wizard turned the elf village's mushroom supply into toadstools and turns Oliver's arthropod friends against him. The most likely place to find this and the other pack-in comics is the same place you find cartridges and instruction manuals: thrift stores, flea markets, garage sales, and the Internet. Because of the full-sized *Atari Force* series, you can sometimes find the Atari Force pack-ins in comic book stores, but it's unlikely.

While DC Comics went the more traditional route of adapting another medium (in this case, video games) to comics, Marvel created a comic book-sized magazine called *Blip*. *Blip* was a mix of interviews, news, playing tips, cartoons, reviews, and more. In other words, a fairly typical (aside from the size) video game magazine from the early 1980s. It was apparently not a success, however, as it only lasted seven issues. Given lead times in the comic book industry, this means the series was probably canceled almost as soon as sales figures from the first couple of issues were obtained. When you look at the timing, this is not particularly surprising. *Blip* ran from February to August of 1983. Due to "The Crash," many video game magazines either ceased publication or reduced their frequency by the end of 1983. You can sometimes find back issues of *Blip* in comic book stores, but because it was a magazine not dedicated to comics, this is a rare occurrence.

As you can see, there is plenty of material for classic video game collectors who also happen to be comic book collectors to find. I've actually been surprised by the number of video game collectors who are current or former comic book collectors. No doubt the marriage of these two mediums should make them happy. And for those who aren't comic book collectors, these comics still make a great addition to your own collection of video game memorabilia.

Missing a Few Issues?

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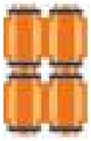

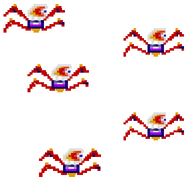

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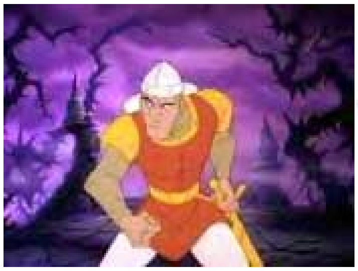


The Dragon's Lair Project

With the upcoming release of a new 3D Dragon's Lair game for the PC (Christmas 2000), we thought you might like to learn everything you can about the original game. And, once you've done that, you might have the urge to research other laser disc games. The Dragon's Lair Project, created by Jeff Kinder, started out as a site devoted solely to Dragon's Lair. It has now evolved into a giant source for all laser disc games. You can choose to see each game's promotional flyers, downloadable audio and video clips, pictures, and the tech center (which displays manuals, schematics, ROM images, tips, and more). They have expanded Dragon's Lair coverage to include news, a walk-thru, and merchandise.

http://www.dragons-lair-project.com

SPACE INVADERS

The Space Invaders Shrine

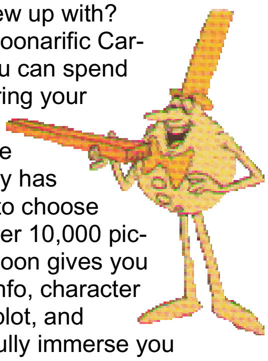
What if there was a magical place you could go to pay homage to Space Invaders? Well, you're in luck! The Space Invaders Shrine, built by German Dirk Behlau, is such a place. We're not talking about a love of classic games in general here; we're talking about a love (obsession?) with ONE game - Space Invaders.

Visit this site to read just about everything associated with the game, from images, sounds, flyers, articles, and books; to manuals, history, emulation, clones, and tips. We bet you'll be impressed!

http://www.spaceinvaders.de/

Toonarific

Feeling a bit nostalgic towards the cartoons you grew up with? Thanks to The Toonarific Cartoon Archive, you can spend hours remembering your childhood cartoon friends. The vast site currently has over 1500 titles to choose from and well over 10,000 pictures! Each cartoon gives you dates, channel info, character names, voices, plot, and screenshots to fully immerse you in the memory. It's very much a labor of love; one that will surely bring back a lot of good memories for you.



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Jaguar Front Page News

JAGUAR FRONT PAGE NEWS
JAGUAR
J.F.P.N.

A great place to satisfy your Jaguar cravings can be found within classicgaming.com's website.

This Jag site from Mike Dolce features regular updates, reviews, ratings, previews, articles, chat, press releases, support groups, and further links of interest. Go play where the big cats are!

http://classicgaming.com/jfpn/

CINEMARCADE

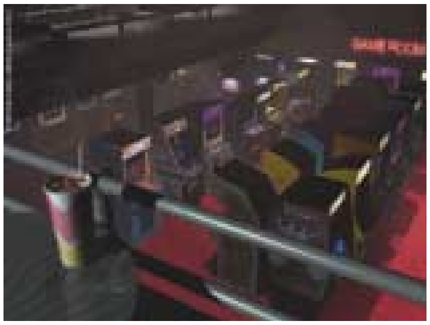
Cinemarcade

Now here's a creative guy! Dave Dries has produced a number of small, animated movies about classic videogames.

A couple of highlights include the *3D Worlds Preview,* which Features 3D rendered worlds of the arcade classics, and *Classic Arcade,* which is a 3D rendered walkthrough of a classic arcade straight from the early 80s, complete with authentic marquees, sideart, and controls.

Another section on the site showcases the "movie posters" of the films.

http://www.cinemarcade.com



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The World of Spectrum

Everything you need to know about the Sinclair ZX Spectrum and then some. Martijn van der Heide's site features, emulators, utilities, documentation, and of course, plenty of games.

http://www.void.jump.org/

Got A Site??

Want your website to be considered for a listing in this column?

Just send us your particulars. . . website URL, contact name, and a valid e-mail address to **cav@classicgamer.com**

Reader Poll

Classic Gamer Magazine wants to be the best darned publication about classic gaming you can get your hands on. By letting us know what game systems you would like us to focus on and any other aspects of classic gaming you would like to see, we will be able to provide you with a more entertaining magazine. This will also let us know your all time favorite games, handhelds, systems, computer, and arcade games. All responses are guaranteed confidential.

Please return this entire poll sheet (photocopies accepted) to: Classic Gamer Magazine, 7770 Regents Road #113-293, San Diego, CA 92122, fax to (781) 846-0373, or e-mail your answers to: cav@classicgamer.com

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SEX: ___Male ___Female

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MARITAL STATUS: ___Single ___Married

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___6-11 ___12-17

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___High School ___Graduate School

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Check off all gaming systems or equipment you own or plan to buy within the next 12 months

	Own	Plan to Buy		Own	Plan to Buy
Atari VCS/2600	___	___	Nintendo Gameboy	___	___
Arcadia/Starpath Supercharger	___	___	SuperNintendo	___	___
Intellivision	___	___	Nintendo 64	___	___
ColecoVision	___	___	Sony Playstation	___	___
Odyssey 2	___	___	Sega Master System	___	___
Atari 5200	___	___	Sega Genesis	___	___
Atari 7800	___	___	Sega Saturn	___	___
Atari Jaguar	___	___	Sega 32X	___	___
Atari Lynx	___	___	Atari 400/800	___	___
Nintendo 8 Bit (NES)	___	___	Apple II	___	___
IBM PC Compatible	___	___	Macintosh	___	___
Sega Dreamcast	___	___			

Other game systems, equipment, computers:

How Much Money Do You Spend Per Week on Video Games?

___Under $5 ___ $5-10 ___ $10-25 ___ $25-50 ___Over $50

How many people (besides you) will read this issue of Classic Gamer Magazine: _______

Your Top Three Favorite Videogame Cartridges Are: (Game and System)

1. ___________________________
2. ___________________________
3. ___________________________

Your Top Three Favorite Computer Games Are: (Game and System)

1. ___________________________
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3. ___________________________

Your Top Three Favorite Arcade Coin-Ops Are: (Game)

1. ___________________________
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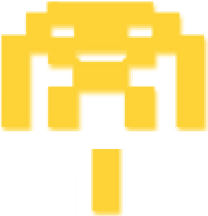

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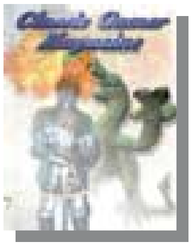

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DEEP THAW

By Chris Lion

I arrived home from my first year of college to find my mother had sponsored a foreign exchange student. “I thought it would be nice to have some noise around the house,” she said during a commercial in her soap. “You left and it was so quiet.”

“Has it helped?” I asked.

“Not really—he doesn’t speak a word of English. I put him in your room.”

I greeted the invader of my room with trepidation. “Hi,” I muttered. “I’m Chris.” He looked up from one of my issues of “Blip!” to glare at me disinterestedly and return to his equally disinterested staring at the magazine.

I cleared my throat and tried again. “Chris,” I said loudly, hoping that by speaking loudly it would get him to understand. While my shouting was clear, his understanding was not.

Hello, Sprechen Ze Pac-Man?
Wundervoll! Ich werde hier mit einer dummen person gehaftet!

I decided to go slower and *LOUDER*. Finally, after repeating it about 15 times, he sighed and said, “Ja, ja bin ich Hans.” Hans? His name was Hans? All I could think of was, “what, they only have one name there?”

After about 40 minutes of mind numbing silence, I decided to go to Roxy’s and play with her Atari. We still did not have a video game system… (my parent’s were SO 1970s—and this was 1983.)

Roxy had taken French in high school, so I thought with Germany invading France so many times, maybe they could somehow communicate. Or, at the very least, they would fight. Either way, the silence would be broken.

We found Roxy in front of her Atari playing Pac-Man. “Pac-Man!” I shouted. “I love this game.” Hans looked on pretending to understand. I pretended to believe him. Détente!

We sat down and I proceeded to help Hans understand how to play the game, by yelling loudly in English. Roxy was no help, because all of her French was forgotten 7 minutes after the final, except for a few choice curse words and three ways to insult someone’s mother.

Hans immediately grasped the idea of Pac-Man and we spent the next few hours shouting and yelling in our native tongues, totally understanding each other. “Daß blauer dummkopf Sie beendet haben sollte. Sie sind glücklich in der Tat!” Hans would shout. I could not understand how I could yell at him in perfectly understandable English, but every time he opened his mouth, gibberish came out.

Over the course of the next few weeks, Hans and I developed a complete understanding of each other. When we wanted to go to Roxy’s we yelled, “Pac-Man!” If I yelled, “Pac-Man,” excitedly and repeatedly, it meant I was about to get killed. If I said, “Pac-Man” slowly, it meant my turn was over. Shouted angrily in a heavy German accent meant that “the little pink ghost was toast.” Or something like that.

We were pretty quiet otherwise. Our communication was strictly through the words “Pac-Man” (except, when Roxy would chime in with the occasional “merde”). It went on that way through most of the summer. He was too lazy to learn English; I, too lazy to teach it.

Thankfully, the wonderful marketing department of Namco had dedicated the summer to Pac-Man. And on those rare occasions that Hans and I were not at Roxy’s playing Pac-Man, we were out spotting the plethora of Pac-Man related merchandise.

My poor mother was never quite sure what to do with us. “Well,” she would sigh to her friends, “at least they’re not constantly playing that damn “Love is a Battlefield” song like the kids next door.” While shopping, she was never sure if Hans wanted something or was just pointing to it. So, after every trip to the grocery store, we came back with Pac-Man Cereal, Pac-Man ice cream, and tons of other Pac-Man related items.

We were in full Pac-Man fever mode. We sang “Pac-Man Fever” at the top of our lungs (“I'm gonna fake it to the left/And move to the right/'Cause Pokey's too slow/And Blinky's out of sight”), we ate Pac-Man candy, slept on Pac-Man sheets, had Pac-Man shoe horns, and Hans was just skinny enough to be able to wear Pac-Man underwear.

At the end of the summer, I had to go back to school and Hans had to go back to Germany. I saw him off, waved goodbye, and watched him board his plane wearing his Pac-Man shirt, Pac-Man running shorts, yellow Pac-Man shaped hat, carrying his Blinky shaped back-pack. On anyone else, it might have looked silly, but Hans somehow made the look work.

That final farewell was a bit teary for me. We’d become close friends, joined by the combined marketing departments of no less than 748 major (and 324 minor) international conglomerates. His final words touched me deeply. He looked into my eyes and said, softly, “Pac- Man.”

I never saw Hans again. And I think of him often… okay, that’s a lie, I hardly ever think about him. But whenever I go to a really old pizza parlor and they have an old cocktail version of Pac-Man sitting in the corner, I stop and think of my gibberish shouting German friend and how a marketing department helped us communicate.

Hans, buddy, I don’t know whatever became of you (and I don’t really care all that much, either), but I just want to say, from the bottom of my heart, Pac- Man, my friend. Pac-Man.

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The Games We Love to Hate

You Talkin' to Me?

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